

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

Volume I.

CACHAR ·

BY

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CALCUTTA:

PRINTED AT THE BAPTIST MISSION PRESS,

1905.

Price Rs. 8.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall fund
(I-X + Suppl. to
I, II + IX)

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Cachar lacks what is generally associated with works of this nature, *i.e.*, a directory. There is, however, only one town in the district, and that town has been described at length. The great bulk of the population live on tea gardens or in villages, which do not lend themselves to a detailed description, and a directory of these villages would be entirely out of place. Lists of all the tea gardens and of all villages that are centres of trade have, however, been appended to the volume, and reference has been made in the text to all villages which are noted for any special industry. It is hardly necessary to add that whenever the Province is referred to, it is to the old Province of Assam, as constituted in 1904, that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner, Captain Kennedy, for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

B. C. ALLEN.

SHILLONG: }
September, 1905. }

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS

General Aspects—Mountain System—River System—General appearance and scenery—*Bils*—Geology—Mineral deposits—Climate—Storms and earthquakes—Fauna.

THE Cachar district, which derives its name from the Kachari tribe, is situated between 24°8' and 25°49' N. and 91°28' and 98°81' E. It is bounded on the north by the Jaintia Hills, Nowgong, and the Naga Hills; on the east by the Naga Hills and Manipur; on the south by the Lushai Hills district; and on the east by Sylhet and the Jaintia Hills. The district consists of two distinct portions—the hills, which are a section of the Assam Range, and the plains, which form the eastern extremity of the Surma Valley. With the exception of an insignificant tract of level land in the angle formed by the junction of the Kapili and the Doiang, the whole of the North Cachar subdivision, which covers an area of 1,651 square miles, is hilly country. The area of the two remaining subdivisions of Silchar and Hailakandi, which is generally classed as plain, is 1,918 square miles. It must not, however, be

General Aspects.

supposed that the whole of this very considerable area is actually level land. The Silchar subdivision includes the southern section of the Assam Range, a belt of hilly country, with an average width of six or seven miles, containing peaks between three and four thousand feet in height. On the eastern frontier there is the Bhuban range, which covers a considerable area, and rises in places to over 8,000 feet above the level of the sea; while on the west of the Hailakandi valley the Chhatachura or Saraspur hills stretch in a continuous line to the Barak. Almost the whole of the country north and south of that river is, moreover, dotted over with low ranges, or isolated hills called *tilas*, which rise like islands from the dead level of the alluvium; and it thus follows that a large proportion of the Cachar Plains is not level land at all.

Mountain
system.
North
Cachar.

From the Jaintia Hills to a point a little to the west of Asalu, the Barail or 'great dyke,' runs almost due east and west across the district, and forms a continuous wall of mountains, gradually increasing in height towards the east. Kalangtam, where the range enters Cachar, is 4,886 feet above the level of the sea; the next important peak is Jentahajuma (5,127 feet), while Sherfaisip, a little to the north, is 5,617 feet. To the south-east of Haf-lang there are three peaks over 5,700 feet in height. Here the range takes a sharp turn towards the north, and reaches its greatest elevation at Hampeopet (6,158 feet), but from this point it gradually declines in height, and at Laikek, a little before it enters the district of the Naga Hills, it is only 2,628 feet above sea-level. Almost the whole of the district north of the Barail is a mass of

hilly country. The general tendency of these hills is to run north and south, but there are only two well-defined ranges, and few summits above 3,000 feet in height. Except on the west these hills take the form of serrated ridges, which rise sharply from the streams which hurry down the valleys at their feet. In their natural state they are covered with dense tree forest, and this is the condition in which the summits still remain. The lower slopes have generally been cleared for the shifting cultivation of the hill-men, and during the interval of rest that is allowed between each period of cultivation are covered with a dense growth of high grass jungle and bamboo. South of the Barail there is a belt of hilly country containing several ranges of some importance with a general trend from north-east to south-west. On the west of the Jatinga river there is a short range with one peak, Damcharahaju, over 8,000 feet in height; while the hills on the eastern side of that river rise to an altitude of 4,402 feet at Upulia, and 8,684 feet at the sanatorium of Nemotha. Further east there are two considerable ranges, which run almost north and south and rise to a height of between three and four thousand feet.

The Bhuban hills are a continuation of the Lushai system, and run almost due north along the eastern boundary of the district to the junction of the Jiri and the Barak. The main range contains peaks varying from two to three thousand feet in height, and throws out a continuous succession of spurs on either side to the east and west. The Rengti hills, like the Bhubans, project from the Lushai system, and are separated from the Bhubans by the broad valley of the Rukni and Sonai.

Hills in
South
Cachar.

Shortly after entering the district they throw out a well-defined spur towards Barunchara on the west, but the main range continues northwards past Cooly Ghat, and then takes a sharp bend westward to Jafirbund. Throughout the whole of its length the Hailakandi valley is shut in between two ranges. The first section in the south-west is known as the Chhatachura range, and starts from the peak of that name, whose summit is 2,087 feet above the level of the sea. The hills gradually decline in height, and the middle section, which bears the name of Saraspur, is only 1,000 feet above sea-level, while near the Barak, where they are known as the Badarpur hills, they are only a few hundred feet in height. A little to the east of the Chhatachura Range runs another and outer range of much lower hills, different sections of which are known as the Katlicharra, Alexandrapur, and Latakandi hills. South of Jafirbund almost the whole of the Hailakandi subdivision east of the Dhaleswari is dotted over with low hills, but the actual range, which stretches northwards from the southern frontier of the district to the Barak and bounds the Hailakandi valley on the east, is known under the following names going from south to north: Jhalnachara, Barunchara, Rupachara, Nunaikhal, Hasiura, Kalachara, Bandukmara, Mohanpur, and Rabatabad hills. North of Jafirbund these hills are very low, and the different sections of the range are separated from one another by considerable intervals of level land. The Bhuban range and the hills to the south of the Hailakandi valley are covered with forest and dense bamboo jungle, and take the form of narrow ridges with steeply

sloping sides which here and there bristle into peaks. North of the Barak the outlying spurs of the Assam range have level summits covered with a rich and fertile soil. Many of these hills have been cleared and planted out with tea, and tea is also grown on the low hills or *tilas* which are dotted about over almost every portion of the plain except the valley of the Sonai.

The principal river of Cachar is the Barak, which rises a little to the east of Mao thana, on the southern slopes of the lofty range which forms the northern boundary of Manipur. From there it flows a westerly and southerly course to Tipaimukh, when it turns sharply to the north, and for a considerable distance forms the boundary line between Cachar and Manipur. After its junction with the Jiri, it turns again to the west, and flows a tortuous course across the centre of the district till Sylhet is reached at Badarpur. From Badarpur to Haritikar the Barak forms the boundary between the two districts, but at the latter place the river divides into two branches, and the southern arm, which is known as the Kusiya, crosses the frontier of Sylhet. The northern branch, which is called the Surma, continues to form the boundary of Cachar as far as Jalalpur. The total length of the Barak from its source to its confluence with the old stream of the Brahmaputra near Bhairab Bazar is about 560 miles; but of this only 120 miles lie through or on the borders of Cachar. In the cold weather the Barak is in places extremely shallow, and the river flows between steep banks which rise to a height of 40 or 50 feet on either side. After heavy rain in the hills it is subject to strong freshets, and the

Riversystem.
The Barak.

level of the water sometimes rises 20 or 30 feet in a surprisingly short space of time. The extent to which the river is used as a waterway will be discussed in the section on communications.

The Jiri.

The Barak receives numerous small tributaries from the hills through which it makes its way, but the Jiri is the first important affluent to join it in Cachar. This river rises in the North Cachar Hills, and flows a course of 75 miles to its confluence with the Barak, during the greater part of which it acts as the boundary line between British territory and Manipur. Its principal tributaries are the Jhinam, and the Digli or Kumruna, which drain the hills immediately to the west.

**The Chiri
and
Madhura.**

A little to the west of Lakhipur the Barak receives the Chiri or Longkhao which rises on the southern slopes of the high range near Haflang. The next important tributary is the Madhura or Bongpai which joins it a little to the west of Silchar town.

The Jatinga.

The Jatinga river is well known as the railway line has been carried up its valley. It rises south of Haflang and flows west and south through the hills till it debouches on the plain at Panighat. From here it flows through the Barkhala pargana, and after receiving the Doloo on its left bank, falls into the Barak nearly opposite Jaynagar, after a course of 86 miles. West of the Jatinga there are numerous small streams which drain the country south of the Barail, but are of little importance except as drainage channels.

The Sonai.

The principal rivers on the south are the Dhaleswari and the Sonai. The latter rises in the Lushai Hills

and after a tortuous northerly course of 60 miles, falls into the Barak at Sonaimukh. As far as Maniarkhal it flows through forest land, but from this point to its mouth its banks are fringed with villages.

The Dhaleswari also rises in the Lushai Hills where ^{The Dhaleswari.} it is known as the Tlong. It used originally to flow along the west side of the Hailakandi valley, and fall into the Barak a little to the east of Badarpur. A former Raja of Cachar is said to have diverted its course a little above Rangpur, and the old channel is now filled up for a distance of about one mile after the commencement of the new channel, which is called the Katakhal. In spite of the fact that the lower reaches of the Dhaleswari are completely cut off from the river that issues from the Lushai Hills, the bed still contains a considerable quantity of water, and between June and September a boat of four tons burthen can proceed above Hailakandi town as far as Ainakhal. The Katakhal flows along the east of the valley and falls into the Barak near Salchapra. The banks are steep and high and the channel of the river deep, but it is liable to sudden freshets, which occasionally do some damage to the villages in the neighbourhood, and small embankments have been erected on two or three gardens to prevent the spill water from injuring the tea. The country between the Sonai and the Katakhal is drained by the Rukni, a tributary of the former river, and the Ghagra which falls into the Barak.

North of the Barail the principal drainage channel is ^{The northern rivers.} the Doiang, which rises near the Mahur station and flows a tortuous course through the centre of the subdivision. From its junction with the Langpher river near

Lamsakhang it forms the northern boundary of the district till it falls into the Kapili, which for the greater parts of its course acts as the western boundary of the North Cachar Hills. The principal tributaries of the Doiang are, on the left bank the Dalaima, the Langlai, and the Langyen. On the right bank it is joined by the Mahur; with its tributary the Mupa, and the Langting. During their passage to the plains these rivers present the phenomena usually to be observed in hill streams. The channel is full of rocks and boulders, which, in conjunction with the rapidity of the current, render them useless for the purposes of navigation. The rivers roar their way towards the lower levels, but, though they add much to the charm of the surrounding scenery, and carry off the rainfall of the hills, they do not as yet contribute anything towards the material development of the country.

General
appearance
and
scenery.

The general appearance of the Cachar Plains is extremely picturesque. On the north, east, and south they are shut in by range upon range of purple hills whose forest-clad sides are seamed with white landslips and gleaming waterfalls. There are none of those wide stretches of unbroken plain, which form so tedious a feature in the landscape in many parts of India. Low hills crop up here and there above the alluvium, rising like rocky islets out of a summer sea; and in one direction or another mountains always bound the view. To the south much of the country is still covered with primeval forest. Further north the higher land has been cleared and planted out with tea, while the lower levels are covered with rich crops of waving rice. Here and there

swamps and *bils*, with clumps of elephant grass and reeds, lend variety to the view. The Barak winds through the centre of the plain, its surface dotted with the white sails of native craft, and its banks for the most part lined with villages. These villages are buried in groves of slender areca palms, broad-leaved plantains, and feathery bamboos, and at all seasons of the year the country looks fresh and green. The hills in North Cachar rise as a rule in steep slopes, covered with forest and bamboo jungle, but rocks and precipices are seldom to be seen.

The following description of the marshes of Cachar, ^{Bills.} which is taken from Sir William Hunter's work,* is stated by the Deputy Commissioner to be still substantially correct. The process of silting up has, however, advanced considerably during the last twenty years, and in the Bakri *haor* high ground has been formed on which permanent villages have been established. In addition to the ones mentioned by Sir William Hunter there are the following large *bils* in the Hailakandi subdivision: Bawa, 2 square miles; Churgul, 2 square miles; Kuliala, 1 square mile; Chunati, $\frac{1}{2}$ square mile.

There are no artificial watercourses or lakes in Cachar District; but the Chatla Fen, during three or four months of the rainy season, swells into a lake-like sheet of water, navigable by the boats which supply rice to the neighbouring tea plantations. It is difficult to give an estimate of the area of this piece of water, as it varies much from year to year, and it is not easy to determine where the actual *bil* begins and where marsh-jungle ends. Its dimensions may, however, be approximately stated to be about 12 miles in length, and

* "A Statistical Account of Assam," Vol. II, page 367.

two miles in breadth at the widest part. The Chatla Fen plays so important a part in the physical geography of Cachar, that an account of it as it appears in the rainy season, and of the land-making process which is steadily going on in its swamps, may not be found uninteresting. The Barak river enters Cachar from the east as a considerable stream, overcharged with silt; and in its course through the district it receives the torrents from the Naga Hills on the north, and the Lushai territory on the south. As soon as the periodical rains set in, both the Chatla and the Hailakandi valleys turn into swamps. For a time they manage to discharge a good deal of their water into the Barak; but as this river receives its freshes from the eastward, it rises above the level of the two valleys, and instead of relieving them of their drainage, pours its own floods into them. Its rise and fall are so sudden, that within 24 hours the direction of the water changes, and the current, which in the morning was streaming out of the marshes into the river, comes rushing back into the fen before night. The outward stream is of the clear brown colour of marsh water, which is charged indeed with organic matter, but has deposited in the swamps *en route* whatever silt it brought from the Lushai Hills. On the other hand, when the Barak rises above the level of the fen, it sends a thick, muddy torrent out of its main channel, heavy with silt, and the colour of pea-soup. The inundation spreads over the vast expanse, swelling the marshes into a wide and deep lake, from which rise little conical isolated hills, with trim rows of tea bushes on their slopes, the coolie lines half-way up, and the planter's neat mat cottage on the summit. Everything else is submerged, except here and there a grove of *higil* trees, whose dark green tops stand up like laurel bushes above a depth of 15 feet of water. As long as their highest branches can breathe the air, these trees will bear any amount of inundation. When the river subsides, the stream again turns from the fen into the Barak. But meanwhile the muddy river water has deposited its silt, and gradually passed through a pale straw colour into a light or deep brown. It leaves behind it a layer of fresh slime, and by innumerable repetitions of this process the bottom of the fen gradually rises. The fishermen say that in some places the depth of water in ordinary floods decreases at the rate of 18 inches every ten years. The process of land-making thus goes on, age after age, the lakes gradually shallowing into fens, the fens into reedy swamps, and the swamps into marshy prairies, covered with coarse grass. At present the Chatla fen exhibits the process in all its stages.

It now contains about 60 deep pools, or *kuris*, in which the filling-up stage has not yet gone far enough to admit even of the longest-stemmed aquatic plant rising to the surface. These pools, the fishermen say, were formerly 90 in number, but many of them have passed into the fen stage, and almost all of them have grown shallower within the memory of a single generation. Meanwhile the shallow marshes slowly rise up into dry land, offering rich crops for the most careless tillage. At the end of the rainy season the dry land emerges in mud and wild disorder. As far as the eye can reach, all is unformed chaos; and in riding across it in the cold weather, one might expect to see a megatherium, or other vast pre-Adamite monster, slide down some slimy bank into the quagmire. Quagmires, indeed, form a typical feature in the landscape. The traveller suddenly comes upon a patch of bright green vegetation, which the unwary might mistake at a little distance for luxuriant grass, but which the more experienced at once recognises as a deep and treacherous quagmire. During the rains sudden whirlwinds sweep across the fen, and, although of brief duration, blow with tremendous violence while they last. The unfortunate boat which has trusted to the shortness of its voyage to enable it to dispense with an anchor, has no resource but to drive helplessly before the storm till it sticks in a reedy marsh, or can fasten itself to its punting poles by fixing them into the shallow mud of a rice-field. Sometimes little fleets of grain barges are thus dispersed in the fen, and are carried by the force of the wind over roods of shallow water, which they find it afterwards impossible to recross without unloading. In the cold weather the ground is broken up by cracks, ravines, beds of silted-up rivers, muddy holes, and quagmires.

Besides the Chatla fen, the following are the other more important marshes in the district, with their estimated area:—
(1) Bakri *haor*, area 10 square miles; (2) Bowalia, 6 square miles; (3) Dubri *bhil*, 1 square mile; (4) Koya, 1 square mile; (5) Karkaria *bhil*, $\frac{1}{2}$ square mile; (6) Thaphani *bhil*, 4 square miles.

The following account of the geological formation **Geology.** of the North Cachar Hills has been given by Mr. De La Touche* :—

“Beyond the limestone ridge to the south-east of the hot

* Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XVI, pt. 4, p. 202.

springs upper tertiary rocks extend in an unbroken mass to the Barail range above Asalu. As far as the police outpost of Gunjong these rocks are horizontal, or nearly so, consisting of fine grained sand-stones and shales. It is in the valley of the Mahur, to the east of Gunjong, that the change from the generally undisturbed condition of the newer rocks on the Shillong plateau takes place, the upper tertiary rocks to the east being everywhere greatly disturbed. The transition does not take place so abruptly as on the southern edge of the plateau, where the newer rocks are bent down suddenly in a uniclinal curve into the area of disturbance; but it is well marked, the rocks at Gunjong having a slight inclination to the east, while in the Mahur Valley they are sharply contorted, and at Kuilong on the opposite side are nearly vertical."

The Chief Engineer engaged on the construction of the Assam-Bengal Railway reported that for the first 80 miles after leaving the Cachar Plains the line ran through shale of the worst description, often intermixed with bands of kaolin. The latter substance swells on exposure and causes heavy slips, and exerts immense pressure on the sides of tunnels, and the difficulty and expense of the construction of the railway was largely increased by the character of the strata through which the line was made. The soil of the plains is of alluvial origin and consists of a mixture of clay and sand in varying proportions: the hills to the south of the district have never been properly explored, but they probably resemble those inhabited by the Lushais.

Mineral
deposits.

Lime is found on a tributary of the Langting to the north-east of Maibang station. The rocks here are shales dipping at 20° to the north-north-west, and the stream has deposited a bed of calcareous tufa on the upturned edges of the shales. The deposit is of small extent and has nowhere a greater thickness than two feet. Similar deposits have been found in the valleys near Gunjong.

The Subdivisional Officer of North Cachar reports that outcrops of lime-stone are also to be seen in the country between the Doiang and Kapili, in the valleys of the Amram and Langyam streams, and at Sinkilangso, Langhuha, and other places. Neither iron nor coal are worked within the hills. Petroleum has been found at Masimpur and Badarpur on the banks of the Barak, and on the Larang, a small stream which rises to the north of Damcharahaju. Traces of it have also been seen at various places in the Saraspur hills. Salt springs exist both in this range, the Bhuban hills, and the Barail, but are only worked near Bansbari and Chandipur in the north-west corner of the Hailakandi valley. The springs are leased annually for a trifling sum, and the brackish water is sold to the people in the neighbourhood. There are hot springs on the right bank of the Kapili near Panimur.

The climate of Cachar is not so pleasant as that of Climate. Upper Assam. The rainfall is extremely heavy, but the temperature in the rains is considerably higher than that recorded in Dibrugarh, and the winter is not nearly so cold and bracing as in the northern valley. The average maximum temperature in January is under 78° Fahrenheit, but this is nearly 7° higher than that recorded in Dibrugarh, and, though the mornings are cold and sometimes foggy, the sun at midday and in the early afternoon has still considerable power. In March the temperature begins to rise, but heavy rain in April and May prevents the development of anything in any way resembling the hot weather of Upper India. Between June and September the climate is far from pleasant. The average maximum temperature during

this period is nearly 90° , the average minimum nearly 77° , and though these temperatures in themselves cannot be considered high, they are most oppressive in an atmosphere surcharged with moisture. During these four months no less than 78 inches of rain fall at the headquarters of the district, and, shut in as it is on three sides by hills, the air of the plain resembles that of a vapour bath. In October the nights begin to grow a little cooler, but the sun is still very hot in the middle of the day, and it is not till the middle of the following month that the cold weather can be said to have regularly set in. The average maximum and minimum temperature recorded each month at Silchar will be found in Table I. In almost every month there is a marked difference between the temperature of Silchar and Dibrugarh, and the average maximum for the year at the latter place is 5 degrees, and the average minimum 8 degrees lower than that recorded at Silchar.

Rainfall.

Table II in the appendix shows the rainfall recorded at certain selected stations in the district. The average annual fall at Silchar is 121 inches, but near the foot of Assam Range it is not far short of 170. The storm clouds sweeping up the valley are, however, stopped by the Barail, and it is on its southern slopes that most of this aqueous vapour is precipitated in the form of rain. At Haflang, immediately to the north of this wall of hills, there are but 77 inches in the year, and at Maibang the annual fall is as little as 55 inches. November to February are the only four months in the year that can be considered dry, as the spring rains are unusually heavy. In March Silchar receives nearly 8 inches, in

April nearly 14, and in May no less than 16 inches; and this before the bursting of the regular monsoon. June and July are generally the wettest months in the year, but August runs them very close.

At Silchar the wind generally blows from the north-east in the morning and from the south-east in the afternoon. About the end of February stormy weather sets in, and in March there are often thunderstorms, and not unfrequently heavy falls of hail which do much damage to the tea. In April and May these storms become less violent, and at no season of the year do they assume the form of cyclones or tornadoes.

Storms and
earth-
quakes.

Cachar, like the rest of Assam, is a seismic area, and considerable damage was done by the shock which occurred on January 10th, 1869. This earthquake was felt in Upper Burma, and as far to the west and south as Patna and Hazaribagh, over a total area of some 250,000 square miles; but Manipur and the eastern end of the Surma Valley were the places that suffered most severely from this visitation. Dr. Oldham, who enquired into the circumstances of this earthquake, was of opinion that the shock probably originated in a fissure about 20 miles long, situated at a considerable depth below the surface on the northern border of the Jaintia Hills. The serious damage wrought in Silchar was due to the fact that the town is situated on a peninsula washed by the Barak river, and to the abnormally high angle of emergence.* The shock occurred at 4-45 P.M. on a cool winter's day, in which there was nothing to suggest the

The earth-
quake of
1869.

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX Pt. I, p. 65 and 70.

approach of any unusual visitation. One eye-witness describes the gradual development of the earthquake in the following terms: "It came on with a gentle undulating movement, which, however, rapidly increased, until neither men nor animals could keep their legs but were thrown down, and such things as bottles, glasses, lamps, were upset, and the *gumlas* were half emptied of water. The water in tanks and rivers was violently agitated, and the Barak rose in huge waves, and wrecked numbers of boats. The landslips caused were numerous and extensive, and many homesteads were carried down the stream." The jail wall, the church tower, the cemetery gates, and the military hospital were all thrown in ruins to the ground. The Deputy Commissioner's bungalow was also wrecked, but this was probably due to the fact that some of the posts in the verandah had been removed in order that they might be replaced by newer timbers, and the bungalows in the neighbourhood sustained but trifling injuries. The Bazar was a scene of utter desolation. Bamboo and mat houses, which elsewhere had remained standing, were here wrecked as hopelessly as the masonry buildings with which they were interspersed. This was due to the fact that they were built near the river's bank which subsided under the influence of the shock, and was broken up into crevasses and fissures. The houses were not shattered by the tremor of the earth, but by the unequal subsidence of the land on which they stood. Luckily the earthquakes occurred in the day-time, when the people were out of doors, or could leave their houses without difficulty, and only six lives were

lost.* In the newer alluvial deposits the earth was broken up into cracks and fissures, and sand and muddy water spouted forth.

The great earthquake of June 12th, 1897, was sen- The earth-
quake of
1897.
sible over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, while the area over which it is known to have done serious damage to masonry buildings was not less than 145,000 square miles; but Cachar was fortunate enough to escape with comparatively little injury. The earthquake is said to have occurred about 5-20 P.M., and the shock was less severe than that experienced in 1869. Hardly any damage was done to buildings in Silchar, but the residence of the Subdivisional Officer and the dak bungalow, both at Hailakandi and Haflang, were rendered uninhabitable. Fissures appeared in the soil, and in the Katigara tahsil houses and land in the neighbourhood of the Barak subsided into the river. Some damage was also done on tea-gardens, and altogether three lives were lost. Little damage was done to the unopened section of the railway in the North Cachar Hills, but the bridges between Badarpur and Silchar sustained serious injuries. Nine of the eleven piers which supported the bridge across the Katakhal were thrown down, and the bridges across the Dhaleswari and the Ghagra were also damaged.

Wild animals include elephants, which are generally Fauna.
found in the hills to the south of the district, buffalo

* Somewhat exaggerated accounts have been published of this earthquake. It has been said that "The church, which was in course of building and nearly finished, was levelled with the ground. Nearly all the buildings, including the Government offices, were destroyed wholly or in part." As a matter of fact, it does not appear that the walls of the Church were even cracked, while the injury to the Government buildings was inconsiderable.

and bison, which are found in the North Cachar Hills, tigers, leopards, bears, and various kinds of deer. For the purpose of elephant hunting, the district is divided into two mahals. The right to hunt in these mahals is put up to auction, and, in addition to the auction price, the purchaser is required to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on each animal captured. In the three years ending 1908-04, forty-six elephants were on the average annually captured. The larger carnivora are no longer common in the plains, and in 1904 rewards were only paid for the destruction of 17 tigers, 16 leopards and 86 bears. Small game include snipe, wild geese and duck, pheasants, partridges, and jungle fowl.



CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Traditional origin of Kacharis—Wars between Kacharis and Ahoms—Migration to Maibang—Migration to Cachar Plains—The eighteenth century. Approach of British—Conversion to Hinduism—Invasion of Cachar from Manipur—Restoration and death of Gobind Chandra—Native System of administration—Pemberton's description of Cachar—Revenues of Kachari Raja—Tula Ram Senapati's territory—Development of the Cachar Plains—Destruction of mutineers in 1857-58—Sambhudan's rising in 1882—Frontier troubles—The Lushai raids—Murders at Baladhan—Archæology.

THE Kacharis of Cachar, or Dimasa, as they call themselves, are generally supposed to be a section of the great Bodo horde. This populous and powerful race is said to have had its origin somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, to have spread in successive waves over Assam, and to have even penetrated as far south as the Tippera Hills. Mr. Dundas, lately Subdivisional Officer of North Cachar, reports that an old prayer is still in use amongst the Dimasa which refers to a huge *pepul* tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahma-putra) and the Sagi. It was here, according to the prayer, that they were born and increased greatly

Traditional
origin of
Kacharis.

in numbers, and from here that they travelled by land and by water to Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Nilachal they moved to Halali, and finally settled at Dimapur. Copper-plates which have been recently discovered, and which are ascribed to the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D., state that the descendants of Narak, one of the earliest kings of Kamarupa, were overthrown by Cala Stambha, a Mleccha or foreign conqueror. Cala Stambha was succeeded by twenty other foreign kings, and the line of Narak was then restored in the person of Brahma Pala.* It thus seems possible that the Dimasa may for a time have ruled at Gauhati, and may have been driven from there eastwards into the valley of the Dhansiri. When the Ahoms entered the Assam Valley in 1228 A.D., the Dimasa occupied the western part of Sibsagar, and a considerable part of Nowgong in addition to the valleys of the Kapili and the Dhansiri.

Wars
between
Kacharis
and Ahoms.

The first collision between the Kacharis and the Ahoms is said to have taken place in 1490 A.D., on the banks of the Dikho river.† The Kacharis were victorious and killed 120 of the enemy, and the Ahoms offered a girl, two elephants, and twelve slaves to induce them to make peace. In 1524, the Kacharis again raided into Ahom territory, but were repulsed, and the Kachari Raja gave his sister in marriage to the Ahom king. There was little loss of life on this occasion, but an expeditionary force sent up the Dhansiri two years later

* Vide J.A.S.B., Vol. LXVII, Pt. I, No. 1, 1898, p. 99.

† The story of the Ahom and Kachari wars has been taken from the Ahom *buranjis*, translations of which will be found in the Office of the Superintendent of Ethnography.

succeeded in killing upwards of 1,700 of the Kacharis. In 1580, Detsung, the Kachari Raja, is said to have offered his sister in marriage to the Ahom king, and to have sent with her as dowery an elephant, 500 swords and cloths, 1,000 napkins, 100 doolies, and Rs. 1,000 in cash; but it was evident that there could be no permanent peace with such an aggressive neighbour. In 1586, hostilities again broke out. Detsung was defeated and his capital was sacked, and the Kacharis were shorn of all their possessions in the valley of the Dhansiri, and north of the Kalang in Nowgong.

Raiding parties continued to be sent into the Ka-
Migration to
Maibang.
 chari country, and it was probably about this time that the king decided to abandon Dimapur, and moved his capital south-west to Maibang on the Mahur river, in the hope that the Ahoms would be unable to follow him through the jungle-covered hills to his new abode. The remains of brick ruins, rock sculptures, and dense groves of bamboos show that Maibang must once have been a thriving place, but the Raja was wrong in supposing that he had passed beyond the sphere of Ahom influence. In 1706, Rudra Singh, one of the most powerful of their princes, despatched an expedition into the hills. The army numbered no less than 37,500 men, and the Kacharis were unable to withstand the attacks of such a powerful force. Maibang was taken and sacked, the spoil including a brass cannon, 700 flint guns, 240 maunds of sulphur, 140 iron shields, 6 large copper drums and 4 tusks.

The Kachari Raja fled southwards to Khaspur,
 and, hearing that the Ahom troops had suffered severely
Migration to
Cachar
Plains.

from sickness during the rains, applied to the Jaintia Raja for help to recover his lost territory. The latter prince persuaded the unfortunate monarch to proceed to Bikrampur, where he met the prime minister of the Jaintia State. He was then induced to advance to the Barak, and to enter a boat in which the Jaintia king was said to be reposing. Needless to say there was no such person there, and the Kachari prince was made captive and removed to Jaintiapur. Both he and the members of his family were treated with scant courtesy, and the Jaintia king proclaimed himself sovereign of the Kachari country. Means were, however, found of applying to the Ahom king for help, which was not refused. A strong force was sent through both the North Cachar and Jaintia Hills, which captured both the princes and conveyed them to the Brahmaputra Valley. The list of spoil obtained, if it is correct, shews that the Kachari king must have been a person of some wealth and power. It included 8 large cannons, 2,278 large and small guns, 12,000 pieces of silver, 143 gold embroidered coats, 68 elephants, and 11 Turkey horses. The opportunity was also taken of removing back to Assam some 1,600 persons who had fled into the hills at the time of the Koch and Muhammadan invasions, or had been kidnapped by the Kacharis. The two captive princes were kindly treated by the Ahoms. The Kachari king was stationed near Bishnath, and was finally sent back to his own country, with ten elephants, and a supply of guns, gun-powder, and other implements of war. He took up his abode at Khaspur, but shortly afterwards was attacked by a mortal disease, and though the Ahom king sent three physicians

across the hills to prescribe for his sick friend, he breathed his last in 1708 A.D.

He was succeeded by his minor son, who on his accession sent a horse, a string of pearls, and a locket to his suzerain. When dismissing the envoys who had brought these gifts, the Ahom king, according to the old chroniclers, gave the following summary of the relations between the two states:—

*Kacharis
subject to
Ahoms.*

“The previous rulers of Cachar were under our protection and paid us tribute. The father of Suradarpa, the present prince, forgot this fact and had to pay the penalty of his forgetfulness. I take this opportunity of reminding his son that he must be both faithful and loyal, and must punctually submit reports to a Borborna who has been posted at Raha to hear all complaints from the Kachari kingdom. These reports will be sent on to me, and I shall pass such orders as seem fit.”

Mr. Soppitt gives 1750 as the year in which the Kacharis migrated to the plains of Cachar, and states that it took place in the reign of Suradarpa's successor Dharmadwaj, or even in that of the next prince Kartik Chandra.* Two reasons are assigned for this migration: one that Dharmadwaj had married the daughter of the Raja of Hill Tippera and had received the upper valley of the Barak as her dowery; the other that the Kacharis were attacked by the Jaintia Raja on the west. The account given in the Ahom chronicles seems to be the more plausible. It was only natural that the Raja, having been once driven to the plains by the Ahoms, should remain there in preference to returning to Maibang, to a palace which had been destroyed, and to a town that had been sacked. Aggressions from Jaintia would seem

*Other
versions of
migration to
the plains.*

* An historical and descriptive account of the Kachari Tribes in the North Cachar Hills, by C. A. Soppitt, Shillong Secretariat Press, 1885, page 4.

to be a very inadequate reason for moving into a portion of the Surma Valley which adjoins the Jaintia Parganas, and which is eminently accessible from Jaintiapur. Mr. Soppit is inclined to doubt the story of the Cachar Plains having formed part of the dowry of a Tippera princess; and if they did, the Tipperas seem to have soon required their own again. In 1757, envoys from the Kachari Government came to the Ahom king and complained that the Tipperas were devastating their territory; the Raja had fled to Mekheli, his uncle to Maibang, and the officers and nobles had taken refuge in the jungle. Cachar was a tributary state, and as such should be protected against invasion from without. An expedition, so the Ahom chronicles says, was despatched; but very little was done, and the Tipperas no doubt retired in their own good time.

The 18th
Century.
Approach of
British.
Conversion
to Hindu-
ism.

Little is known of the history of Cachar during the eighteenth century. The section of the Kachari tribe that moved into the Surma Valley or remained in the hills of North Cachar was numerically small, and, in 1901, there were only 8,708 Kacharis in the hills and 4,152 in the plains of the district. Settlers moved across the border from Sylhet, and refugees poured into the state from Manipur; but even in 1885 the total population of the Cachar Plains was only estimated at 50,000 souls.* The Kachari Raja seems in fact to have sunk to the position of the petty ruler of an unimportant tribe, living in a remote and jungly tract. The first connection of the British with the district dates from 1762, when Mr.

* Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, by Captain Pemberton, Calcutta, 1835, page 199.

Verelst marched from Chittagong with five companies of foot, to assist the Manipur Raja who had been driven from his throne by the Burmese. They reached Khaspur and remained there for nearly a year, but were prevented by the difficulties of the country from going further, and were finally recalled. The next historical event of importance was the formal conversion of the Raja Krishna Chandra to Hinduism in 1790 A.D. He and his brother Gobind Chandra were placed inside the body of a large copper cow, and thence produced by the Brahmans who declared them to be Hindus and Kshattriyas, and to be the descendants of a union between Bhima, the hero of the Mahabharata, and a rakshashi whom he espoused in the Nambar forest. The people followed the example of their prince, and nearly all the Kacharis in the district now describe themselves as Hindus. A list of the Kachari kings will be found on page 408 of the second volume of Hunter's Statistical Account of Assam, but all except the last few names are merely the inventions of the Brahmans.

In 1809, Krishna Chandra, who was Raja at that time, allowed himself to be entangled in the web of intrigue that has always surrounded the throne of Manipur, with results that were fatal to his own small principality. Madu Chandra, the Raja of Manipur, had been driven from his throne by his two brothers Charjit and Marjit. He applied to the Kachari Raja for aid, which was afforded him, but was killed in the attempt to regain his crown. Charjit and Marjit then fell out, and Marjit was compelled to retire to Cachar, taking with him a hockey pony of quite exceptional

*Invasion of
Cachar from
Manipur.*

excellence. Gobind Chandra, the brother of the Kachari Raja, was siezed with a strong desire to possess this pony, and when his offers to purchase were refused, took possession of the animal by force, in defiance of the wishes of the owner. Marjit left Cachar in anger and applied to Burma for assistance, and, with the aid of the Burmese, drove his two brothers Charjit and Gambhir Singh from Manipur in 1812 A.D. Charjit took refuge in the Jaintia Hills, and, when Marjit invaded Cachar in 1818, he came to the assistance of Gobind Chandra. Marjit was compelled to retire, but Charjit and Gambhir Singh remained in possession of the greater part of the Cachar plains. In 1819, Marjit was driven by the Burmese from Manipur, and took up his quarters in the Hailakandi valley.

Restoration
and death of
Gobind
Chandra.

The Burmese then expressed the intention of adding Cachar to their dominions, but the British Government were unable to acquiesce in the suggestion that such a powerful nation should extend its territories right up to the frontiers of Sylhet. Negotiations were entered into with the Manipuri usurpers, but Gambhir Singh, thinking that he would be able to protect his territories from invasion without the assistance of the British, refused to entangle himself in an alliance which might afterwards prove fatal to his independence.

The British Government then turned to Gobind Chandra, expelled the Burmese, and seated him once more upon the throne. In return for this assistance he was required to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 10,000, which must have proved a somewhat heavy drain upon the resources of the country. The Raja took up his

abode at Haritikar, but in 1880 he was assassinated by the orders of the Manipuri Raja Gambhir Singh.* In the absence of natural heirs his territory lapsed to the British, under the terms of an agreement executed in 1826. The district was formally annexed by proclamation on August 14th, 1882.

The following account of the Cachari system of administration is reproduced from the Statistical Account of Cachar by Sir W. W. Hunter :—

Native
system of
Administra-
tion.

“ From their arrival at Kashpur the distinct history of Cachar commences. Numerous colonies of Bengalis, who came up the Barak valley from Sylhet, had meanwhile planted their first settlements on the northern side of the river, shortly after passing the Sylhet frontier. It is supposed that Musalman Bengalis also migrated into Cachar about the same time. At first the new-comers seem to have simply cleared land as stray settlers, paying rent to the Cachari Raja. By degrees, as they became stronger, they obtained from the prince a sort of constitution, which protected them from interference on the part of Cachari tax-gatherers and court officials. Thus, when the British took possession of the District in 1880, they found two distinct systems of administration in existence. One of these, dealing with the Cachari subjects, consisted of a long gradation of officials, who held appointments which would have involved a minute control over the subjects, but for the circumstance that there were hardly any subjects to control. The only people subject to their immediate authority were the uncivilised hill tribes of Parbattias, Cacharis, Kukis, Nagas, etc. Among these officers were a Bara Bandari (chief law-man), with a large establishment of subordinate law-men; a Senapati or general, with a number of superior officers, not quite so titular as the law-men; also a religious establishment of Cachari Barmans, to perform sacrifices for the health of the king and the safety of the people. These sacrifices were handed down from primitive

* Mr. Ware Edgar in the Dacca Blue Book (page 358) states that the Manipur Raja was responsible for the assassination. Mr. Soppitt (page 9) attributes the murder to Gumar Singh, at one time general of the Cachari troops, who quarrelled with the Raja and fled to Manipur, where he organized a raid.

times, and could only be performed by the descendants of the native Cachari priests. Among them was a human sacrifice for the Raja, celebrated on certain great occasions.

Hindu Agricultural Communities.—The Bengalis, on the other hand, were almost independent of these officers. Their great aim here, as elsewhere, was to keep themselves a peculiar people. They sought only for as much influence at court as would secure them from interference. They had a constitution of their own, based on a revenue system now peculiar to Cachar, which is perhaps a vestige of the once great Cachari kingdom. The fundamental principle of this system was the holding of land by a number of persons connected by voluntary association. The unit of the system was the *khel*. Just as in Hindu communities the village forms the basis of the agricultural commonwealth, which is bound together, theoretically or practically, by ties of kindred and caste, so the *khel* formed the unit of the agricultural community of Cachar, but its members were not connected by any ties of kindred, caste, nationality, or creed. From the first, Musalmans and Hindus are found side by side in the same *khel*; and now that this principle of voluntary association has extended to other enterprises, no bar of race or creed is opposed to the admission of any part of the population. Thus there are instances of associations for leasing fisheries or catching elephants, which include not only Bengalis of every caste and creed, but Kukis, Nagas, and even Europeans. When the Manipuris began to settle in Cachar, they were at first inclined to be exclusive, and to associate in taking land only with their own race. But since our accession they have fallen into the general scheme, and now a Manipuri often takes a lease along with a Musalman or a Hindu, to the exclusion of a man of his own race, who may be objectionable on account of his temper or character. The principle of association is, therefore, purely commercial. It is a voluntary copartnership of a number of persons for the purpose of carrying on a specified undertaking, acknowledging no other nexus except community of interest. This nexus does not even extend to community of capital or of profits, for as soon as the common lease is obtained, the land is divided by the partners amongst themselves, and each sets up for himself on his own allotment. * * * * * But although the nexus was weak as between the individual sharers, it was absolutely inseparable as regards their obligations to the ruling power. These obligations consisted in, firstly, the payment of the revenue, and, secondly, the discharge of certain customary services. The latter included the supply of labour for the Raja's works, and of necessaries to him on his progress. * * *

* * * The first common obligation, that of paying the rent, still remains.* This was originally done by means of an agent (*mukhtar*) appointed by the sharers and confirmed by the sovereign. He was generally the leading man and principal sharer in the corporation, and seems to have been primarily responsible to the Raja for the rent. That is to say, if he came up to court with a deficient payment and a lame excuse, he was the man on whom the royal wrath fell, and who was squeezed in the first instance, before steps were taken against the corporation.

In course of time, as the number of *khels* increased, groups of adjacent *khels* were joined together into larger unions, marking the second stage in the development of the principle of voluntary association in the Cachar revenue system. The larger union was called a *raj*; and as each *khel* had been represented at court by its principal sharer as agent, so each *raj* elected the principal man in it, or the head man of the chief *khel*, as its own representative. In both cases the Raja's approval was required, and a title seems usually to have been conferred on the officer who represented the *raj*. These titles were of Bengali origin. The representative of the larger union was entitled either *chaudhari*, *mazumdar*, *lashkar*, *bara-bhuiya*, or *chhota-bhuiya*, according to his social status, and the comparative importance of the union he represented. Of these titles, the only one requiring notice is *lashkar*, which extends far up into the Garo Hills, where the head-men of agricultural villages are called by the same name. These titles originally clung to the land and its representatives, but before we obtained possession of the country they had become transferable at a fixed scale of prices. The title of *chaudhari* fetched £10; that of *mazumdar*, £8; that of *lashkar*, £6; *bara-bhuiya*, £5; and *chhota-bhuiya*, probably £4. The titles were hereditary, and descended to all the sons and their descendants. By degrees the unions began to separate into classes. Those that paid their whole rent to the Raja were called *khelma*, and their representative *khelma lashkar*, or *khelma chaudhari*. The general process was, that the sharers in each guild or *khel* paid their portion of the rent to the *khel-mukhtar* or agent. Each *khel-mukhtar* paid the total rent of his *khel* to the *raj-mukhtar*, who in his turn paid it to the Raja at the royal residence. The office of *mukhtar* or agent was theoretically elective, and at first no doubt the holders of it were actually elected. By degrees,

* The copartnerships were broken up at the last settlement and individual leases issued.

however, the office became hereditary, either the eldest son or next male relative succeeding with more or less show of election.

By the development of this system, the Bengalis practically obtained a constitution, which in quiet times was sufficient to preserve them from all interference on the part of the royal officers. In the first place, it secured them from the visits of the revenue officials. Once the lease was given, and the *khel* or agricultural guild was established, the sharers had an elective organization of their own for collecting the rent and for depositing it in the royal treasury. As their representatives were primarily responsible in their persons for the rent, and no doubt were often imprisoned, or otherwise made to appease the royal indignation, in case of default, they probably assumed petty powers, judicial and fiscal, with a view to providing against the contingency of default, and of forcing the individual guildsmen to pay up their shares. At all events, the fact remains that they did acquire such powers, and at the date of the British occupation they appear in the light of an unpaid magistracy, with fiscal and communal powers. All were alike subject to the sovereign, and each derived his title from him. But the fiscal gradation of guild representation was carried into the unpaid magisterial service, the guild representative being inferior in his criminal functions to the union representative, if indeed he had any acknowledged and properly conferred powers at all. At the head of all was the League Representative of Bikrampur, the first Hindu subject of the Cachari Raja. As the insignia of his office, a whip was bestowed on him by his sovereign, and he exercised an indistinct sort of primacy among the other union representatives. The king retained his judicial prerogative in all heinous offences, such as murder; and there seems to be some probability that the *bara bandari* (Cachari chief law-man), the *raj pandit* (Hindu spiritual guide to the king), and the *bara mazumdar* (principal union representative) sat as a sort of judicial committee to advise the Raja in capital cases where a Bengali was concerned. The fact that the Hindu civil code depended upon the Sastras, and the Musalman code on the Kuran, of both of which the Cachari Raja was equally ignorant, forced the immigrants to depend on some voluntary organization for settling their internal disputes, and their head-men were thus entrusted with certain fiscal and criminal powers. These criminal powers depended upon the representative status of the league heads, and not upon the title conferred by the Raja. Thus, the chief criminal power was vested not in a *chaudhari*, but in the *mazumdar* of Bikrampur, who became *bara mazumdar*, and as such above all the *chaudharis* in the

State. While the fiscal and criminal administration was thus provided for with the minimum of royal interference, civil disputes were settled without any interference whatever. In case of a difference between the sharers of a *khel*, the matter was referred to the *khel-mukhtar*, who probably took the advice of the elders on the subject; if he could not settle the dispute, the question was referred to the *raj-mukhtar* or union representative. In disputes between *khels*, the court of the first instance was the League Head, who, with the assistance of a council selected from the different *khels* within his *raj*, heard and decided the case. It is not clear whether any legal organization existed for enforcing such decrees; but the fiscal and criminal powers of the *raj-mukhtar* gave him a large and loose authority, and, as a matter of fact, his decree was enforced by the imprisonment of any person who delayed to obey. In difficult or keenly-contested cases, an appeal or reference could be made to the Raja. In such cases the sovereign consulted the *raj pandit* if the parties were Hindus, and that officer repeated the Sastras and laid down the law. In Musalman cases the Raja consulted with whoever was the chief acknowledged exponent, for the time being, of the Kuran. Stories are still current how, when a Hindu case came up, the Raja asked his *pandit* what the sacred texts said. The *pandit* declared them. The Raja answered, 'It is just,' made due obeisance to the *pandit*, gave him a present, and decided the case.

Pemberton, writing in 1835 shortly after the annexation of the district, describes the plains of Cachar as a fertile tract with great possibilities, which suffered from a want of population, and from the disturbances that had occurred at the beginning of the nineteenth century. South of the Barak there were, according to Captain Fisher's estimate,* 1,711 square miles of the finest plain, almost wholly unoccupied, though the sites of numerous villages, which were densely inhabited during the reign of Krishna Chandra, were still discernible along the river banks. North of the river cultivation soon revived on

Pemberton's
description
of Cachar.

* Report on the Eastern Frontier of British India, by Captain Pemberton, page 198.

the establishment of a settled form of government, and a line of villages quickly sprang up on both sides of the Barak from Badarpur to Banskandi.

Revenues of
Kachari
Raja.

According to Pemberton* Krishna Chandra obtained a lakh of rupees as revenue which was realized partly in cash, and partly in kind and labour, and was distributed as follows: The Cachar Plains Rs. 69,000; the North Cachar Hills Rs. 5,000; hills subsequently annexed to Manipur Rs. 1,000; Dharmpur, which seems to have been situated between the Kapili and the Jamuna, Rs. 25,000. It is difficult to imagine that the estimate for Dharmpur can be correct. The accounts given in the Ahom chronicles suggest that this portion of Assam was at all times a very jungly tract, and at the time when Pemberton published his report it is said to have contained not more than five square miles of cultivated land.

Tula Ram
Senapati's
territory.

Before considering the development of the district under British rule, some reference must be made to Tula Ram Senapati. This man was sprung from humble origins, but for many years he occupied as a *quasi* independent chief, a considerable tract of country in the North Cachar Hills and the upper valleys of the Dhansiri and Doiang.

His father, Kacha Din, was a khitmatgar in the employ of Raja Krishna Chandra, who was appointed to an office in the hills. He rebelled, and then was foolish enough to put himself in the power of the Raja's Agents at Dharmpur, by whom he was put to death. His son, who was acting at the time as a chaprasi in the Raja's service, escaped to the hills, and successfully resisted all

* Page 203.

attempts that were made to reduce him to submission. In 1828, he entrusted the command of his levies to his cousin Gobind Ram, who defeated Gobind Chandra's troops, but then turned upon his kinsman, and drove him into Jaintia territory. From here Tula Ram was brought back by Gambhir Singh, the Raja of Manipur, and in 1829 Mr. Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, induced Gobind Chandra to assign to him a definite tract of land within the hills. In 1834, he entered into an agreement with the British Government by which he was confirmed in the tract of country "bounded on the west by the Dyung river, and a line to be determined hereafter, drawn from the Barea ford on the Dyung to a point on the Jamuna river, between the cultivation of Seil Dhurmpore and of Duboka and the Hajae (excluding the two latter); by the Jumuna and Dyung rivers north, by the Dunsira river east, and to the south and south-west by the Naga Hills and Mowhier river"—boundaries which it would be a little difficult to lay off upon the ground. Tula Ram died in 1850, and as his descendants did not seem capable of administering the country it was resumed in 1854.

Captain Butler, who visited the ex-chaprasi in 1845, gives the following account of the surroundings of his village near the Jamuna river :—

Butler's
account of
Tula Ram.

"His dwelling was a wretched grass hut situated on the edge of a tank choked with rank weeds, situated in the middle of an extensive and poorly cultivated grass plain. A few straggling huts, inhabited by Cacharees and dependents of Sena-puttee, formed all that could be called a village; a few pigs, fowls, and ducks were wandering about, but there were no signs of comfort around any of the huts; no gardens or enclosures; all appeared poverty stricken, as well as sickly, in this wilderness

of jungle. Tooluram Senaputtee, an infirm old man, was clothed in the meanest cotton garb, and looked more like a skeleton than a living being.”*

Tula Ram's territory is said to have covered an area of about 2,160 square miles, but to have contained only about about 5,200 persons, who could not have paid a revenue of more than Rs. 1,000.

Develop-
ment
of the Cachar
plains.

Under British rule there has been a great expansion of the population, and the plains, which in Captain Fisher's time were one vast expanse of jungle, have now been peopled almost to the limit of their capacity. Pemberton in 1885 estimated their population at some 50,000;† in 1901 it was nearly 415,000. This great development has been due to natural increase, to the existence of the tea industry, which has brought thousands of coolies from other parts of India, and to immigration from the densely peopled district of Sylhet.

The history of the district since it came under British administration has been one of peaceful progress, and there is little for the historian to record. The mutineers from Chittagong were, however, defeated here in 1857, the Lushais were for many years a source of trouble on the southern frontier, and several Europeans lost their lives under circumstances which aroused considerable excitement at the time.

Destruction
of mutineers
in 1857-58.

At the end of 1857, a party of the Chittagong mutineers succeeded in making their way through Sylhet into the district, with the object of proceeding into Manipur. They were met by a detachment of the

* Travels and Adventures in the Province of Assam, by Major John Butler London. Smith Elder & Co., 1855, page 16.

† Page 199.

Sylhet Light Infantry, which inflicted considerable loss upon them in the several engagements that took place. The mutineers were driven into the jungle where they were hunted down by Kukis, or died of starvation, and it is believed that out of the three companies that left Chittagong not more than three or four individuals escaped death or capture.

In 1882, a curious outbreak occurred which resulted in the death of the district officer. The incident is thus described by Sir W. W. Hunter:—

*Sambhudan's
rising in
1882.*

"A man named Sambhudan, who had set up as a worker of miraculous cures, and as a directly inspired agent of the deity, gathered together a small body of followers, and took up his residence at Maibang, where he lived at free quarters on the forced contributions of his neighbours, and became the terror of the country-side. The Deputy Commissioner proceeded to Maibang with a force of armed police, but on his arrival found the place deserted. Meanwhile Sambhudan with twenty followers had proceeded to Gunjong, the headquarters of the North Cachar Subdivision, about six hours' journey from Maibang, and burnt the place; killing two servants and a policeman. They then returned to Maibang, where Major Boyd and his little force had encamped for the night, and attacked him at daybreak the following morning, the deluded marauders having been persuaded that Sambhudan's magical spells had rendered them invulnerable to bullets. The attack was easily repulsed, and eight or nine Cacharis were killed. Major Boyd, however, received a severe cut in the hand from a dao or hatchet, which being unskilfully treated in the absence of proper medical assistance, resulted in his death from tetanus in a few days. Sambhudan evaded capture for a time, but his hiding-place was afterwards discovered. In attempting to escape from the cordon of police which surrounded him, he received a wound in the leg, from the effects of which he bled to death. A man named Man Singh, who acted as a sort of high priest to Sambhudan, was sentenced to transportation for life."

Bounded as it is both on the north and south by hills inhabited by wild tribes, Cachar has suffered more

*Frontier
troubles.*

than once from the incursions of these savages. In 1835, Pemberton reported that the southern portion of the district had been abandoned in consequence of outrages committed by raiding parties from the Lushai Hills, and that Captain Fisher was establishing Manipuri villages in this locality, as they were accustomed to dealing with those savages.*

**The Lushai
raid of 1849.**

The first raid on record is that of 1849 when the Lushais attacked a Kuki village ten miles south of Cachar, killing 29 persons, and making 42 prisoners. In the following year an expedition was sent under Colonel Lister into the hills, which burnt a village and then retired. The protection of the frontier continued to be a source of much anxiety to the district officers and steps were taken to raise a Kuki company.

**The Lushai
raid of 1869.**

The Lushais continued to raid upon the plains, but Cachar itself escaped from their visitations till 1869, when they burnt the garden of Loharbund and made an attack upon Maniarkhal. An expedition was despatched into the hills, but the difficulties of the country and the inclemency of the weather were such that it returned without accomplishing anything of note. In December 1869, Mr. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner, made a tour into the Lushai Hills, and it was hoped that he had succeeded in placing our relations with the hillmen on a more satisfactory footing. These expectations were, however, doomed to disappointment, and in less than twelve months after his return, our troublesome neighbours once more made their presence felt.

In January 1871, the Kachari village of Ainakhal in the south of the Hailakandi valley was attacked, and 25 persons were killed and 37 taken prisoner. The Alexandrapur tea garden was destroyed, and, though the proprietor Mr. Sellar succeeded in making his escape, Mr. Winchester, a neighbouring planter who was breakfasting with him, was killed, and his little daughter taken prisoner. A few hours later an attack was made on the neighbouring garden of Katlichara, but the raiders were driven off from the bungalow and the lines, though they succeeded in killing five coolies and wounding others. The attack was renewed on the following day but the Lushais were again beaten off. Three days later Maniarkhal, which is situated on the Sonai near the eastern frontier of the district, was attacked. The defenders were relieved by a party of sepoy and police under the District Superintendent of Police, and on the second day the Lushais were driven off with a loss, it is said, of 57 men. While the attack on Maniarkhal was going on, another party of these savages raided the gardens of Darmiakhal and Nagdigram, killing eleven persons on the latter estate and capturing three prisoners. On the following day the rear guard of a party of troops and police, who had been sent to the relief of Maniarkhal, were attacked near Nagdigram. The men stood their ground with coolness and determination, and gave time to the convoy whom they were escorting to escape. Eventually they were overpowered and six out of eight sepoy killed. The last raid was made towards the end of February, on the Jhalnachara garden. The Lushais were repulsed, but not before

The Lushai
raid of 1871.

they had killed four persons and wounded three. In the following November, a strong military force was sent into the hills. This expedition was completely successful in procuring the submission of the chiefs and satisfaction for the outrages, and twenty years elapsed before another raid was made upon the plains. In 1890, after the great expedition of the previous year, stockades were built at Aijal and Changsil, and a Political Officer was stationed in the Lushai Hills. Captain Browne, the first officer gazetted to this appointment, was, however, killed in September 1890, and the hillmen rose and attacked the two stockades. Mr. McCabe was appointed to succeed Captain Browne, and in 1891 suitable punishment was meted out to the offending chiefs. It was thought that the tribes were gradually settling down under our rule, but in February 1892, they suddenly rose and attacked Mr. McCabe. The Political Officer had no difficulty in holding his own, till the arrival of reinforcements enabled him to act on the offensive; but in April, a party of Lushais, with the evident intention of creating a diversion, raided the garden of Barunchara. They burnt five houses in the lines and killed 42 coolies, some of whom were terribly mutilated, and then withdrew into their jungle-covered hills. The Lushai Hills have now been pacified, and since 1892 there have been no incursions into the district of Cachar. A full account of the Lushais and their raids up to 1882 will be found in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Mackenzie. For the history of the tribe subsequent to that date, reference should be made to the Gazetteer of the Lushai Hills.

The villages of the more savage of the Naga tribes lie considerably to the north-east of Cachar, and only once since our occupation of the district have they ventured to disturb its peace. This was in 1880, when the Khonoma men, who had shortly before killed Mr. Damant, the Political Officer of the Naga Hills district, were being beleaguered by our troops. A party of raiders made their way from Khonoma to Baladhan, a garden more than eighty miles away in the north-east corner of the Cachar Plains, and killed the manager Mr. Blyth, and 16 or 17 of his coolies. The same garden earned an unenviable notoriety in 1893, when the bungalow was broken into, the chaukidar and the manager murdered, a woman who lived in the house mortally wounded, and the contents of the safe removed. Six Manipuris and one Gurkha were finally sent up for trial before the Sessions Judge, who convicted all the prisoners, and sentenced four to death and three to transportation for life. On appeal they were acquitted by the High Court, but His Excellency in Council recorded the opinion that, after perusing the papers submitted, he was unable to say that there were no grounds for the opinion expressed by the Chief Commissioner that the acquitted Manipuris were most probably the persons concerned in this atrocious crime. The case aroused much interest at the time, and a question was asked in Parliament with regard to certain irregularities which were said to have taken place in the course of the police investigation, the magisterial enquiry, and the trial in the sessions court. Further enquiries which were made into the matter tended to exonerate the officers concerned.

Murders at
Baladhan.

**Murder of a
railway
engineer in
1898.**

In 1898, some alarm was caused in the North Cachar Hills by the murder of Mr. Wilde, an executive engineer, who was engaged on the construction of the railway. Mr. Wilde was riding along a narrow part of the road when he met two Pathan contractors with a third man of lower rank mounted on ponies. He called on them to move aside and let him pass, and, when they refused to do so, there was a violent altercation and some jostling. One of the Pathan contractors was hustled off his pony, and the other then drew his knife and attacked the engineer. Mr. Wilde galloped off, but, after he had gone a short distance, his pony stumbled and threw him, and the Pathan, who had followed in pursuit, again attacked him with his knife. The second contractor then came up, and the two men pushed and dragged their victim into the jungle at the side of the road, where they hacked him to death, the wounds inflicted being of a most brutal character. The whole occurrence was witnessed by a Naga who was working near. The murderers and two other Pathans who were concerned in the outrage were subsequently arrested. One of the murderers committed suicide in jail, the other was sentenced to death and hanged.

**Archæo-
logy.**

Cachar contains few archolæological remains of any interest. At Maibang there are ruins which are probably the remains of the palace of the Raja, but the walls have been almost entirely demolished, and it is hardly possible to trace even the outline of the building. There are also some fifteen rock sculptures in an indifferent state of preservation, eleven of which represent foot and one a horse soldier, one a horse, one a tiger, and one a

tortoise. A solid rock, the size of a small cottage, has been carved into the outward seeming of a house. At Khaspur, on the river Madhura, there are four temples and two other masonry buildings, but they are of comparatively recent date and possess little architectural merit. At Chandragiri there is a temple with a *lingum* which is still worshipped by the villagers, while at Badarpur there are the remains of an old fort on a rock overhanging the Barak.



CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

Area and density—Growth of population—Migration—Sex—Marriage—
Infirmities—Language—Caste—Religion—The Shahaj Bhajan—
Hindu Festivals—Sacred places—Muhammadans—Christianity—
Occupations—Hindu marriage ceremonies.

**Area and
Density.**

THE total area of the district in 1901 was 3,769 square miles* and the density was only 121 to the square mile. Cachar is, however, pre-eminently a place in which a general average of this kind is liable to give rise to most erroneous impressions, and, as a matter of fact, the district is by no means sparsely peopled. The section of the Assam Range which has been formed into the North Cachar subdivision only returned a population of 12 to the square mile, after deducting the persons who at the time of the census were engaged on the construction of the Assam-Bengal Railway. But the hills are not capable of supporting a dense population, and, prior to the completion of the railway, the intervening valleys offered but few attractions to the settler.* In the plains, after deducting the area included in the reserved forests which occupy almost the whole of the south-eastern corner of the district, there was a density of 821 to the square mile. A considerable portion of the Katigara thana, which lies between the Barak and the North

* In consequence of the change of boundaries in 1904, the area of the district was reduced to 3,564 square miles.

Cachar Hills, is too low for permanant cultivation, and the density in this area is only 82 to the square mile. If we deduct this tract in addition to the area occupied by reserved forests, it appears that in the remainder of the plains, which cover an area of 697 square miles, the density in 1901 was as much as 515 to the square mile, a figure which for an almost purely rural population must be considered high.

There seems little doubt that, prior to our occupa- Growth of
population.
tion of the country, the population was extremely sparse. Reference has been already made to Pemberton's estimate of 50,000 souls as the population of the plains. In 1855, a rough census was taken which gave a total of 85,000 inhabitants.† This estimate was apparently too low, and ten years later Mr. Edgar calculated that, including

<i>Cachar Plains.</i>			
	Population.	Percentage Variation.	
1872 ...	205,027	.....	
1881 ...	293,738	+ 43·3	
1891 ...	367,542	+ 25·1	
1901 ...	414,781	+ 12·8	

<i>Cachar Hills.</i>			
	Population.	Percentage Variation.	
1872 ...	30,000 (est.)	.....	
1881 ...	20,120	.....	
1891 ...	18,941	- 5·8	
1901 ...	40,812‡	+ 115·4	

bers since that date, the total population was about 152,000 souls. The first regular census was taken in 1872, and the abstract in the margin shows the population returned at that and at each successive census, and the percentage of increase in

* The hills if carved out into terraces after the fashion adopted by the Angami Nagas could support a much denser population than 12 to the square mile. The indigenous population is, however, small, and these low hills with their intervening valleys would probably prove very unhealthy to foreign immigrants.

† Dacca Blue Book, page 328.

‡ Includes 20,824 persons engaged on the construction of the railway.

each decade. Separate figures are given for the hills and plains as the conditions prevailing in these two areas are entirely different.

At first sight it looks as though the census of 1872 must have been far from accurate, but though no doubt it was not complete, its errors were less serious than one might be tempted to suppose. Immigration was proceeding vigorously at this period, and in 1881 it was calculated that only 18·6 per cent. of the gross increase that had occurred since the preceding census, was due to natural growth. This was less than the natural increase in the district, as a whole, during the next decade, which was said to be as much as 18·2 per cent. The bulk of the increase between 1891 and 1901 was due to the excess of births over deaths, and the number of people born and censused in the plains increased by 15·5 per cent. A considerable proportion of this increase was no doubt due to the offspring of females born outside the Province, of whom there were more than 42,000 in Cachar in 1891. The general result is eminently satisfactory. A century ago the eastern end of the Surma Valley was very sparsely peopled, but the population has grown with remarkable rapidity, and outside the reserved forests there is little land remaining in the plains available for settlement. The population of the hills is small, and is very nearly stationary, the number of persons enumerated there in 1901, excluding the temporary visitors working on the railway, being only a few hundreds more than the population of twenty years before. The following statement shows the growth by subdivision during the last two decades:—

	Population.	Percentage variation.	
	1901.	1891-1901.	1881-1891.
Silchar	... 301,884	+ 12·7	+ 26·3
Hailakandi	... 112,897	+ 13·0	+ 21·9
North Cachar			
(excluding railway)	20,490	+ 8·0	- 5·8

101,252 persons, or 24 per cent. of the population of **Migration.** the plains in 1901, had been born outside the Province. The great majority of these persons are coolies, and about three-fifths of the total came from the neighbouring Province of Bengal; Manbhum, Hazaribagh, Bankura, and Ranchi being the districts most strongly represented. There were also a large number of immigrants from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, half of whom came from Ghazipur and one-fourth from Azamgarh, and over 12,000 from the Central Provinces. Apart from the garden cooly and the Bengali trader, the number of immigrants is not large. There were a few Kabuli traders, a class that earned an unenviable notoriety in the Kalachara dacoity of 1904, a few Nepalese, and a few traders from Rajputana and Ajmer-Merwara. In North Cachar no less than 40 per cent. of the population in 1901 had been born outside the Province, but they were merely temporary visitors engaged on the construction of the railway, and have long since left the district. Cachar, as a whole, gains largely by interdistrict migration. In 1901, it received 28,988 persons and sent out 7,259 emigrants, the net gain being 21,729. The majority of emigrants go to Sylhet and the Naga Hills and are probably cultivators who move their homes across the district boundary. The same presumably holds good of the

immigrants, the great majority of whom come from the neighbouring district of Sylhet (25,971), and the State of Manipur. The number of people born in Sylhet and censused in Cachar only increased by 2,259 during the last decade, but this does not represent the total amount of immigration that has taken place. Assuming that the death-rate amongst Sylhettis settled in Cachar in 1891 has been 40 per mille per annum, it would have required the transfer of 8,500 people merely to keep the figures at the level of that year. For further details on the subject of birthplace reference should be made to Table V.

Sex.

The proportion of women to men in the Cachar Plains has always been low, as will be seen from the following figures showing the number of women to a thousand men at each census since 1872: 1872, 857; 1881, 878; 1891, 891; 1901, 918. This is, however, largely due to the disturbing effect of immigration, and if this factor be eliminated and the proportion calculated on the number of people born in Cachar and censused in the Province, it rises to 1881, 979; 1891, 974; and 1901, 976; a ratio which at the last two enumerations was 14 per mille higher than that prevailing in the plains districts of the Province as a whole. In North Cachar, amongst the indigenous population, the proportion of women very slightly exceeded that of men.

Marriage.

The following statement shows the extent to which infant marriage is prevalent in the Cachar Plains, and for the sake of comparison, figures have been added for Goalpara and Nowgong:—

Percentage of girls married and widowed in 1901.

		Age. 0-10	Age. 10-15
Cachar, Hindu	...	2.3	40.8
Muhammadan	...	0.6	32.9
Goalpara, Hindu	...	4.8	62.3
Nowgong „	...	0.2	10.5

Percentage of girls unmarried.

			Age. 15-20.
Cachar, Hindu	...	...	13.3
Muhammadan	...	...	9.0
Goalpara, Hindu	...	...	7.2
Nowgong „	...	...	40.1

Infant marriage is not so common in Cachar as in Goalpara, but this unnatural and unwholesome practice is far more prevalent than it is amongst the Assamese residing in Nowgong. For every Hindu child-wife or widow in the latter district under 10 years old there are 11 in Cachar and 24 in Goalpara, while for every Hindu girl so circumstanced between 10 and 15 in Nowgong there are four in the former and six in the latter district. The effect of fashion can be seen in the tendency amongst the Muhammadans to marry their girls young; though they have not even the traditional excuse put forward by the Hindus for a practice which must be inconvenient to the bridegroom, and is liable to produce the most deplorable effects upon the bride, and her off-spring. The figures for North Cachar would not repay examination, owing to the enormous number of temporary visitors. Amongst the animistic tribes in the hills, girls are hardly ever married before they attain sexual maturity.

The growth of the population largely depends on the proportion borne by the potential mothers to the total. In

this respect the Cachar plains have an advantage over most of the districts in the Province, as 169 per mille of the total population in 1901 were married women between 15 and 40. The corresponding figure for Assam, as a whole, was 157.

Infirmities.

The Cachar Plains are fairly free from the four special infirmities selected for record at the census, blindness, deaf-mutism, insanity and leprosy. In no case did the proportion of afflicted males exceed the proportion for the Province of Assam, though in every case except that of the blind it was largely in excess of the proportion for

	Blind- ness.	Deaf- mu- tism.	Lep- rosy.	Insan- ity.	the Indian Empire. The abstract in the margin shows out of 10,000 males in 1901 the number afflicted in Cachar, in the Province as a
Cachar Plains ...	8	9	11	5	
Assam ...	10	9	13	5	
Indian Em- pire ...	12	6	5	3	

whole, and in the Indian Empire.

Language.

Bengali is the common language of the plains, and in 1901 was returned by 61 per cent. of the population; Hindi by 21 per cent.; and Manipuri by 11 per cent. In the hills the commonest indigenous forms of speech are Dimasa, which belongs to the Bodo group of languages, Rangkhoh which belongs to the Kuki group, and Naga. Dimasa or Hills Kachari comes from the same stock as Bodo or Plains Kachari, but Dimasa differs more from Bodo than even Garo does. An account of this language will be found in the Linguistic Survey of India, Volume III, Part II, page 56. For an account of Rangkhoh reference should be made to Part III of the same volume of the same work, page 181.

Caste.

The earliest inhabitants of the district seem to have been Kacharis, Manipuris, Muhammadans, and low

caste Hindus from Sylhet. There is in consequence a certain lack of distinction in the Hindu social system of the present day. There are a certain number of Brahmans and Kayasthas, but the bulk of the Hindu population is composed of castes that occupy but a humble position in the Hindu social scale. The one most strongly represented is the Dom Patni, a fishing and boating caste who have largely taken to agriculture. Then come the Manipuris, who, though they style themselves Kshatriyas, are of aboriginal descent, and the Namasudra or Chandal, another fishing and boating caste who also have taken to the plough, but who, like the Dom Patni, come very low down in the Hindu social scale. The Jugis or weavers have settled in strong force in the district, but they have quite abandoned their traditional occupation. From their hands, too, a Brahman is unable to take water, but they are making strenuous efforts to rise in the social scale. The coolie castes most strongly represented are the Bauris, Bhuiyas, Chamars, Mundas, Musahars and Santals. The great trading caste of Sylhet, the Shahas, and the great cultivating caste of that district, the Das, are only represented by a few hundred persons. A description of the origin and subdivisions of the principal Hindu castes found in the district will be found in Mr. Risley's Tribes and Castes of Bengal. The numbers returned under each of the main castes will be found in Table V.

The European population of the district is considerable, and in 1901 amounted to no less than 317 persons, a figure that was only exceeded by Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Most of these people were living in the *sadr* subdivision.

**The
Kacharis.**

The history of the Kachari tribe has already been set forth at length, and for an account of the manners and customs of the Dimasa, the section of the tribe living in Cachar, the reader cannot do better than refer to Mr. Soppitt's Historical and Descriptive Account of the Kachari Tribes in the North Cachar Hills, which was reprinted, with an introduction by Mr. Baker, in 1901, by the Shillong Secretariat Printing Office.

The Kacharis generally live in the valleys that intersect the hills. The houses in their villages are placed in two lines facing one another, and in the centre there is the young man's club or *nodrang*, which is so common a feature in the villages of the wild tribes of the north-east frontier. The houses are built on the ground, and are divided into three compartments. Men and women alike are fairly tall and muscular. Men wear a waist cloth, shawl, and turban; women wear a petticoat reaching from the waist to the knee, and another cloth to cover the upper portion of the body. The Kacharis in the valleys and the plains portion of the district, grow wet rice; in the hills they follow the shifting system of cultivation known as *jhum*. Two sections of the Kacharis call for special mention. The Barmans are Kacharis who are not only Hindus but have obtained by purchase the right to wear the sacred thread. These Barmans are not a caste or separate section of the tribe, and even the child of a Barman has to pay for his sacred thread, though he is allowed to buy it cheaper than the ordinary Kachari. The Shemsharao are a cross between the Kacharis and the Nagas, whose headquarters are situated in the Shemkor village which overhangs the Langting river. They

are said to be Kacharis who were driven eastward by the Syntengs about the middle of the eighteenth century. They, in their turn, beat back the outlying sections of the Naga tribes and took possession of their women. The language that they speak is pure Kachari, but in physique and face they have a strong touch of the Naga, and they wear Naga and not Kachari clothing.

The Kukis are divided into four tribes: the Rangkhols ^{The Kukis.} with their allied tribe the Betes, and the Jansen with their allied tribe the Thadois.* The Rangkhols and Betes originally lived in the hills now inhabited by the Lushais. Farther south were the villages of the Jansens, who, urged on by one of those strange impulses which have kept the tribes of the north-east frontier in a condition of perpetual unrest, moved northwards into the country of the Rangkhols, and compelled them to fly across the Surma Valley into the hills of North Cachar. Shortly after this exodus the Betes were compelled to follow the Rangkhols, and the Jansens and Thadois were left in occupation of the hills that form the southern boundary of Cachar. The migration of the first band of Kukis, "the old Kukis" as they are sometimes called, is said to have taken place at the end of the eighteenth century.† But the northward movement of the tribes had not yet spent itself, and in course of time the Jansens and the Thadois were themselves driven out of the southern hills, and were compelled

* For a fuller account of the Kukis the reader should refer (a) to a Short Account of the Kuki Lushai Tribes, by Mr. Soppitt, Shillong Secretariat Press, 1887, which is the authority for the description of the tribe which is given in the Gazetteer; and (b) to a Monograph on the Kukis which is at present under preparation.

† Mackenzie's North East-Frontier of Bengal, page 146.

to follow the Rangkhols to their retreat in North Cachar. This second migration of the "new Kukis" took place in 1851-52. Though loosely referred to under the one generic term of Kuki, there is a marked difference between the Rangkhols and the Jansens. The former are a democratic community, and the affairs of the village are managed by a group of village officers, the *galim* or headman, the *gabur* his assistant, and two subordinates, the *chapia galim*, and the *chapia gabur*. These offices are not hereditary, and a candidate for public service has to begin at the bottom of the ladder as a *chapia gabur*. The Jansens on the other hand are ruled by Rajas, whose authority before they moved into British territory was unquestioned. The Raja was supported by a contribution levied from each house and was aided in the administration of the village by a *mantri*. The Kukis generally build their villages on the tops of hills, the houses being placed on either side of a long street. The houses are built on platforms with a veranda in front, and are partitioned off into separate cubicles. The people are short and have sturdy well-developed limbs. They have high cheek bones and flat noses, and the men have often a very effeminate appearance. The Rangkhols work for their wives and are generally required to render three years' service to their father-in-law before marriage, and two after. This excuses them from the bride price which the Jansens generally have to pay, but they in their turn are exempt from any term of service. Like most of the other hillmen they are *jhum* cultivators, and unless they have been to some extent affected by the ideas of their Hindu neighbours,

there are few articles of food which come amiss to them.

Most of the Nagas in Cachar live in the northern ^{Nagas.} subdivisions of the district and belong to the Kaccha Naga tribe. Unlike the Kukis and Kacharis they are not a migratory people, and though they shift their *jhums* every second or third year, they seldom change their village sites. Their houses are built of planks and thatch, the side walls disappearing in the roof, which is brought down from either side of the roof tree almost to the ground. The people are very liberal in their views on the subject of what does or does not constitute human food; and there are few things which to a Naga come amiss, from a rat to an elephant which has been dead some weeks, or from a snake or a puppy to a smoking slice of pork. Like most of the other hill-men they are very partial to rice beer, which they consume in enormous quantities. Child-marriage is unknown, and as long as they remain unwed, girls are allowed the greatest latitude. Once the knot is tied they abandon the amusements of their youth, and girls, who were most prodigal with their favours in their salad days, are seldom unfaithful to their marriage vows. An account of the Naga tribe of North Cachar was published by Mr. Soppitt in 1885 (Shillong Secretariat Press.)

Classified by religion, the population of the Cachar ^{Religion.} Plains was distributed at the last census in the following proportions: Hindus 67 per cent., Muhammadans 81 per cent., Animists 2 per cent. The indigenous populations of the Cachar Hills was about equally divided between Animism and Hinduism as nearly all the Kacharis

returned themselves under the latter head. Of the Hindus who returned their sect, 49 per cent. described themselves as Saktists, 9 per cent. as Sivaites, while 42 per cent. professed the milder tenets of Vaishnavism.

**The Shahaj
Bhajan.**

A somewhat curious sect is that which is known as the Shahaj or Kishori Bhajan. It was founded by one Kalachand Vidyalandker of the Bikrampur pargana in Dacca, and salvation is said to be obtained by imitating the amorous actions of Krishna at Brindaban. Each devotee has one or more female associates with whom, according to most accounts, he indulges or endeavours to indulge in very curious practices. The members of this sect are said to assemble secretly at night and to worship the mistress of their priest, who is supposed to represent Radha, the wife of Krishna. Food is offered to her, and after she has taken a little, the *prasada*, or leavings, are distributed amongst the congregation. Songs are sung, ganja is consumed, and a good deal of sexual intercourse is supposed to take place. The female worshippers are generally young widows, and most of the members of this sect are persons of low caste.

**Hindu
festivals.**

The following are the principal festivals of the Hindus :—

The Saraswati puja is held in January or February. A clay image of the goddess of learning is procured and offerings of flower, leaves, and eatables are made to it, and the worshippers abstain from book and pen. This puja is usually confined to the higher classes of society. The Surya puja is held in the month of Magh (middle of January to the middle of February) in honour of the sun god. A plantain tree is set up in the

courtyard and decorated with flowers, and offerings of leaves, eatables, and flowers are made, the women singing all the while in honour of the sun god. In February or March comes the Sivarati, during which the worshippers fast during the day and sit up at night to worship Siva's lingam and eat bhang and ganja. About a fortnight later there is the Doljatra. On this occasion the image of Vishnu is worshipped, and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of the amorous contests of Krishna with the milkmaids of Brindaban. Towards the end of March there comes the Baruni snan, when ablutions are offered to the spirits of departed ancestors, and the villagers feast on curds, parched grain, and molasses. The Rathjatra takes place in June or July when an image of Vishnu or Jagannath is dragged about on a car. On the last day of Sraban (middle of August) there is the Bishahari or Manasa puja in honour of the goddess of snakes. This puja is very popular in Cachar and is observed by all Hindus, high and low, rich and poor alike. Flowers, leaves, and eatables are offered to a clay image of the goddess, and goats, ducks, and pigeons are sacrificed. A few days later, the Vaishnavite section of the community, and more specially the ascetic Vaishnavas or Bairagis, as they are called, celebrate the Jhulan festival. Images of Krishna and Radhika are worshipped and swung to and fro, and songs are sung at night. In the same month or in the month following there is the Janmastami in honour of the birth of Krishna. The main feature of this festival, which is observed by every devout Hindu, is abstinence from food and drink. In September or

October there is the Durga puja. This is a time for general merry-making. New clothes are given to the children, members of the family who are away return home, and there is general feasting and jollification. The rich purchase clay images of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, and Ganesh. Poorer people make their offerings to plantain trees or earthen jars filled with water and mango leaves. The puja lasts for four days. Goats are usually sacrificed on each of the first three days, and on the third day those who can afford to do so kill a buffalo. On the last day the goddess is worshipped with flowers, leaves and eatables, and then thrown into water amidst singing and beating of cymbals.

Four days after the Durga puja comes the Lakshmi puja, and in the last quarter of the year there are the Kali, Kartik, and Jagadhatri pujas, and the Rashjatra. The last-named festival is only observed by the Vaishnavites and is especially popular with the Manipuris.

A special form of religious ceremony is known as the *noaka* or boat puja and is performed by a wealthy man in satisfaction of a vow, who generally spends from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 on the ceremony. A shed is built, at the end of which is a boat painted and gilt, from which rise, tier upon tier, the images of various gods, amongst whom Bishahari is generally the most prominent. For several days sacrifices are offered to the deities, and Brahmans, who are well paid and feasted for their services, offer up their prayers. At the end of this time the house and its contents are abandoned and allowed to fall to pieces. Every Hindu has a *guru* or religious teacher,

to whom he makes an annual offering varying from two annas to five rupees according to his means.

The Pous or Uttarayan Sankranti held about the middle of January has no religious associations and corresponds to the Magh bihu of the Assam Valley. The villagers light bonfires in the rice fields, at which they warm themselves after the morning bath, and devote the day to merry-making.

Cachar, as is not unnatural, cannot boast of many ^{Sacred Places.} places which are sacred in the eyes of the Hindus. Lying as it does at the extreme end of the Surma Valley, and peopled, as it must originally have been, by unconverted tribes, there is nothing in its history to connect it with the mythology of Hinduism. In the *sadr* tahsil there are two hills, Tilain and Shamatila, which are sacred to Kali, and one, Sivtila, which is appropriated to the great god Siva, but none of these places are held in much esteem. About 29 miles south-east of Silchar, there is a peak in the Bhuban range, known as Bhuban tila, which is visited by devout Hindus. There are images of Siva and Parbati at this spot, and pilgrims make offerings to these idols, bathe in a pool, and drink from a sacred well in the vicinity. They then enter a cave in the side of the hill which is supposed to possess a certain degree of sanctity. The Siva ratri and the Baruni are the principal occasions on which this hill is visited by the devout. There is also an idol of Siva on the Laklaki tila in the Chatla Haor pargana, to which people have made pilgrimages of recent years. In the Saraspur hills, to the west of the district, there is a place in village Thandupur which is said to have been consecrated by the presence of Kapil

Muni, who lived there in the time of Pura Raja, the father of Gaur Gobind the king of Sylhet who was overthrown by the Muhammadans in 1884 A.D. The principal festivals observed at this place are the Choet Baruni and the Siva ratri. A considerable fair is held at Katigara on the occasion of the Baruni. There is a Kalibari in the Silchar town which was founded by a peshkar of the Deputy Commissioner's office in 1838, and another in village Tarapur in the Barakpur pargana, which was founded in 1871. At Hailakandi also there is a Kalibari of some note.

**Muhamma-
dans.**

The great bulk of the Muhammadans have moved into the district from Sylhet, and almost all of them are members of the Sunni sect. It is said that the ordinary villager is fairly well acquainted with the principles of his faith, and that it has not been infected with Hindu superstitions to any marked degree, though in the remoter tracts Muhammadans sometimes subscribe to funds started by Brahmans during a smallpox epidemic to promote the worship of the goddess Sitala. There are no mosques of any special sanctity, and prayers are usually said in a thatched hut. The number of people converted to the creed of Islam on religious grounds is said to be extremely small, but men or women, who have become entangled in an intrigue with a Musalman, sometimes change their faith on that account.

**Minor
Religions.**

**Brahmos 49
Jains ... 22
Buddhists 23
Sikhs ... 165**

The statement in the margin gives details for the other religions that had a comparatively small number of adherents in Cachar, in 1901. Nearly all the Sikhs were found in North Cachar, where they were employed in the service of the Assam-Bengal Railway Company.

There were only 1,040 Christians in Cachar, in 1901, 688 of whom were natives. A branch of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission was established at Silchar about 50 years ago, but in the early seventies the work was given up and was not resumed till 1887. In 1908, there were four missionaries there, three of whom were ladies. The Cachar Plains appear to be a somewhat barren field for missionary enterprise, as the number of native Christians only increased by 178 in the twenty years preceding the last census. Christianity has made practically no progress in the hills. Chris-
tianity.

Cachar, like the rest of Assam, is a rural area, and in 1901, nearly 89 per cent. of the population of the plains returned agriculture as their means of support. Tea, the only industry of importance in the district, is only a form of agriculture, and other occupations, such as those of the fisherman or potter, are often combined with husbandry. In 1901, the occupations of the people were classified under 520 different heads, and details for the great majority of these heads will be found in Table XV, Part II, of the Census Report. It is, however, doubtful whether these figures would repay examination. A census does not supply data which are suitable for minute classification or admit of profitable examination in detail, and this fact has been recognized, not only in India, but in most of the countries of Europe. The difficulty which is there experienced is greatly increased in a Province like Assam, where little progress has been made in the specialization of function. The proportion of workers to the total population (48 per cent.) is fairly high. This is largely due to the predominance of the tea industry, which finds Occupation.

work for men, women, and children alike, as the women-folk of the ordinary cultivator do not work in the fields to the extent which is common in the Assam Valley.

Hindu
marriage
ceremonies.

Most of the Hindus in the plains are married by the *jagya* rite, a ceremony which corresponds to the *hompura* of Assam. The first thing to be done after a match has been agreed upon is to fix the date of the ceremony. The bridegroom's representatives proceed to the house of the bride with fish, sweetmeats, curds and betel-nuts, and, on their arrival, the Brahmans of the village are summoned and asked to discover an auspicious day. The next stage is known as Panakhili, and consists of the offering of betelnuts and leaves, with two small pieces of gold and silver, to the family idol, or to the idol of a neighbour, if neither of the families possesses an idol of its own. Two nights before the wedding day the bridegroom and the bride are solemnly bathed, and on the following morning the general merry-making begins. A party of drummers is called in, who, with short intervals of rest, keep up their unmelodious music day and night, the children of the two families are decked out in their best, the bride and the groom are solemnly bathed, and friends and relatives assemble from all sides. At night a theatrical performance is given in the bridegroom's house, if his means allow of it, and a party is despatched to fetch the bride, for in the Surma Valley the actual ceremony generally takes place in the house of the groom. On this night also the contracting parties are once more solemnly bathed. Early the next morning a priest sprinkles water over them from a mango leaf, and places a daub of an oleaginous black ointment, called

adibash, on their foreheads. During the day the bridegroom and some male relatives on behalf of the bride offer oblations to the spirits of their ancestors, and a feast is given to the Brahmans and the assembled guests. In the evening the contracting parties are again solemnly bathed, and attired in their best clothes, and pending the advent of the bride, who arrives in the middle of the night attended by most unmusical musicians, the groom is allowed to witness the theatrical performance that is going on.

When the time for the actual ceremony arrives he is anointed with sandal wood, a crown of pith and flowers is placed on his head, and he is escorted to the front of the main house where a maid or married woman presents him with a ring, a pair of cloths, and some curds. Both parties then enter a small enclosure in the courtyard which has been fenced in with split bamboos and plantain trees, the groom is seated on a stool, and the bride marches round him seven times, throwing flowers and a red powder over him as she completes each circuit. The next stage is called *sampradan*, and is really the binding part of the ceremony, when the girl and her dowry are formally handed over to her husband. A fire is then lighted, flowers, rice, and *ghi* are thrown into it, and the priest utters the appropriate *mantras*. The young pair, who by this time must be thoroughly worn out, are then allowed to retire to rest for the remainder of the night. On the following day they are again solemnly bathed, and are conducted round four bamboos in the courtyard, and a feast is given to the assembled guests. This ceremony is repeated on the fourth day, as on the

intervening day the young couple are not allowed to see one another, and the marriage is then said to be complete.

Lesser
marriage
rites.

Where widow marriage or the marriage of a divorced woman is permitted, the services of a priest are not required, and the ceremony consists of little more than a feast to the friends and the relations. A wedding by the *jagya* rite costs from Rs. 50 to Rs. 300, the bulk of this expenditure being incurred on the provision of food, clothing, ornaments, and fireworks, and the payment of Brahmans and musicians. A widow marriage costs from Rs. 10 to Rs. 70. The lower caste Hindus, who form the great mass of the Hindu population, and the Muhammadans, usually pay money for their brides, the price ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 200. The latter is probably a fancy figure, and Rs. 40 or Rs. 50 is generally enough to satisfy the demands of the bride's parents. The bridegroom usually takes his wife to his own home, but occasionally takes up his abode in the house of his father-in-law.

Amuse-
ments.

The ordinary amusements of the people are chess, dice, and cards, and the women of the lower castes take part in dances known as *gopini kirton*. Singing and a rude form of music are a constant source of pleasure, and in places there are simple theatrical performances. In their own home the Manipuris are devoted to the national game of hockey on horseback, which is simply polo on small ponies, played with seven aside, with no goal posts, and with a disregard of the rules which are necessary in the interests of safety where bigger ponies are employed. In Cachar they seldom have an opportunity of playing polo, and have to content themselves with hockey on foot.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Fibres—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Cultivation in the hills—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield and value of crops—Live stock—Grazing—Cattle disease—Tea—Development of industry—Labour supply—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Outturn and prices—Green tea—Forests—The reserves—Timber trees—System of management—Timber trade—List of reserved forests.

THE staple crops of the Cachar Plains are rice, which **Staple crops.** in 1908-04 covered 66 per cent. of the total cropped area; tea 19 per cent.; oil seeds 5 per cent.; other food grains including pulse 1 per cent.; and sugarcane 2 per cent. Wheat, barely, gram, and maize are only cultivated in small patches, generally by foreigners. The manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice falls into three main subdivisions, *sail* or **Rice.** transplanted winter paddy, *aman* or long-stemmed paddy generally sown in marshy tracts, and *aus* or summer rice. *Sail* usually forms about 70 per cent. of the rice crop of the plains, *aman* about 8 per cent., and *aus* about 22 per cent.

Sail.

Sail, or transplanted winter rice, is raised in the following way. The seeds, which are selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, are steeped in water in bamboo baskets, with a layer of straw spread over them, till they begin to germinate. They are then sown broadcast on little beds near the homestead, or on the higher parts of the rice fields. These nursery beds, which are known as *hali charras*, are ploughed up five or six times, and watered till the soil is reduced nearly to a puddle. They are then divided up into small patches with little drains which serve to tarry off the water if there is heavy rain.

The seed comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer, these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site, they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks' old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*guchis*) each of which contains two or three plants at the beginning of the season, and four or five if transplantation is being carried on at the end of summer, when there is little probability

of the seedlings throwing out new roots. The distance at which the *guchis* are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil and the time at which the work is done, but, as a rule, they are placed about eighteen inches apart. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off before they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is sometimes carried out by the women of the humble Hindu castes such as the Dom Patnis Malis, and Numasudras. Muhammadans never allow their womenkind to labour in the fields, and pay the Hindu women from two to two and a half rupees for every acre planted out. The Dom Patnis and Naths or Jugis have recently come to the conclusion that it is derogatory to employ their women in this way, and no longer allow them to transplant the paddy. Such an innovation is not to be regretted as the work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Sometimes the supply of seedlings runs short, and the grain is then steeped in water till it germinates, and sown broadcast on the field. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field turns to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January, harvesting is going on. Except amongst the Manipuris, the reaping and carrying of the paddy is entirely done by men. A handful of stalks is seized and cut off about eighteen inches below

the ear. Each of these handfuls is called *kachi*, taking its name from the sickle used by the reapers, and twenty or thirty are piled together and then tied up to form a *muit* or bundle. Two *muits* form the load which is carried across the shoulder by the men, on a sharp pointed bamboo or pole cut from an areca tree called *hooja*. The enterprising raiyat in Cachar is, however, gradually realising that there are easier and cheaper means of transporting burdens than men's shoulders, and the harvest is sometimes dragged home on a primitive wheel-less sledge made of bamboo, to which a bullock or a buffalo is harnessed.

Aman

Aman is a long stemmed variety of paddy, which generally yields a smaller outturn than *sail*, while the grain is not, as a rule, of such a fine variety. *Asra*, which is a kind of *aman*, is sown broadcast on low land which has been ploughed up five or six times, and is harvested at the same time as *sail*. The area under transplanted *aman* is not large, and the system of cultivation is practically the same as that employed for *sail*. *Aman* is generally grown in the lower country such as the parganas near the foot of the North Cachar Hills, Banraj, the Chatla haor, and, most of all, the Hailakandi pargana.

Aus is either sown on *chur* land which is exposed to risk of flood, or upon fields from which a crop of *sail* is subsequently taken; it is also sometimes grown in conjunction with a crop of *aman*. In *chur* land the fields are ploughed three times and harrowed, and a short interval is then allowed to give time for the weeds to rot. Another ploughing follows, the seed is sown broadcast, and the ground is again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. The

crop is generally ready for the sickle in June or July. *Aus* is occasionally transplanted like *sail*, but ripens earlier than that form of rice. *Aus* is grown very largely in the Hailakandi subdivision, where there is nearly one acre of *aus* for every two of *sail*, whereas in the *sadr* thana the proportion is about one to six. The two varieties of *aus* most generally grown are known as *murali* and *dumahi*. The latter, as its name suggests, is supposed to ripen in two months, though it usually takes a little longer, while for *murali* at least three months are generally required.

There are three different systems for raising mus- Mustard.
tard in the district, known by the following names: (1) *dhupi*, (2) *hainna*, (3) *haoria*. *Dhupi* is generally sown on high land near the homesteads. The land is ploughed five or six times, and then manured with cowdung. Three or four ploughings follow, and the mustard seed is sown. The field is then again ploughed twice or thrice and carefully harrowed, to ensure that the seed is mixed with the soil. *Hainna* mustard is sown on *chur* land, the system followed being the same as in the case of *dhupi*, but manure is not required. The *haoria* mustard, as its name implies, is raised in *haors*. It is sown on the moist silt as soon as the water sinks, and no ploughing is required. The land is fertilized by the ashes of the reeds growing in these marshes, which have to be cut and burned before the seed is sown. Mustard is ready to be pulled in February. The plants after they have been taken from the soil are generally left to dry for a few days. They are then tied up in bundles and carried to the homestead where the seed is threshed out with bamboo sticks. Most of the mustard in the

district is grown in the Hailakandi valley, and in the parganas on either side of the Barak, such as Sonapur, Banraj, Rupairbali, and Barakpur.

Fibres.

Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop. The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready they are taken from the water, and the outer fabric is neatly removed from the stem. There were only 86 acres under jute in the Cachar Plains in 1908-04.

Small patches of rhea (*bœhmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes where they are heavily manured. When the plants are ripe a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

**Storage and
Threshing of
Grain.**

Very little sun generally falls upon the actual homestead of the villager as it is buried in clumps of trees, and the grain is accordingly dried and threshed in an open space outside the *bari* called the *chotal*. The place selected is cleared of grass and jungle, plastered with cowdung, and surrounded with a small embankment. The grain is generally trodden out by bullocks, and winnowed either by letting it fall to the ground from a sieve or *kula*, or by fanning it as it is spread out over the ground. When dry it is stored in a small granary or *bhoral*.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is generally made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood and consists of three parts: (1) the handle and the body, which are usually all in one piece, (2) the pole, which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and (3) the yoke which is merely a piece of bamboo fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animals required to draw it. It weighs, as a rule, about 20 lbs., and when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as three feet from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an instrument can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective implement.

Agricultural
implements.
The plough.

The harrow (*moi*) is a bamboo ladder about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field by cattle. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough, before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Hoes (*kodals*) are used to trim the embankments (*ails*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazars and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles (*kachi*), with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased and cost from 2 to 4 annas.

Other imple-
ments.

The ordinary instrument used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam of wood with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot and the pestle is thus raised into the air. The weight is then removed and the pestle falls into a small wooden mortar which is sunk in the ground. A large pestle *sia*, and mortar *gail* are also sometimes used for husking grain.

Sugarcane.

Sugarcane is grown on high land near the village site where the soil has to be well manured with cowdung, on low hills or *tilas*, and along the banks of rivers. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross products of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Three varieties of sugarcane are recognised in Cachar, *viz.*—Dhola Khagri, Lal Khagri, and Bombay.

The Bombay variety is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The land on which the cane is to be grown is hoed until it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and while the crop is growing, it is hoed and weeded several times. Constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field.

The total area under sugarcane in the plains in

1908-04 was 5,200 acres. The parganas in which it is most extensively cultivated are Vernerpur, Udharband, Chatla Haor, Lakhipur, Sonapur, and Banraj. In the disforested tracts, in the south of the Hailakandi subdivision, no cultivation is required. The low hills are cleared of jungle, the earth turned up with a hoe, and the tops inserted. Canes so planted will yield a crop for three years in succession, as after the stems have been cut the roots are burnt, and throw out new shoots themselves the following season. The pressing of the cane and the boiling of the juice goes on from December to March. The native mill is made of wood, and consists of two rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a beam supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two is affixed a pole which is driven round and thus causes the two rollers to revolve. This form of mill is called *kamrangi*, but it has been largely superseded by the iron mill. The juice is stored in empty oil tins, and, when a sufficient quantity has been collected, is boiled in iron cauldrons. When the liquid has been reduced to the proper consistency, the cauldron is taken from the fire, and the molasses stirred till they assume the consistency and hue of yellow mud.

In the valley bottoms the Kacharis sometimes grow ^{Cultivation in the hills.} wet rice, in the manner which has already been described. On the hill sides the people follow the shifting system of cultivation known as *jhum*. The jungle is cut in February and March, and fired as soon as it is dry.

The ground is then hoed lightly over, and the rice, which is of two varieties, red and white, sown. While the crop is growing, it has to be kept free from weeds, and it is finally harvested in November. Other crops raised are cotton, chillies, and maize. Cotton is planted, if possible, in sandy soil, in May or June, and is gathered about the the beginning of November. The ordinary agricultural implements in the hills are *daos* or bill-hooks, small axes, hoes, in which the head is fitted at an acute angle to the shaft, and sickles.

Causes affecting productiveness of land.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes:—the water-supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. The first-named factor is probably of most importance. The animals which do most injury to the crops are pigs, monkeys, and birds.

Serious damage is sometimes done by insects called *lehari* and *kharta*. The *kharta* is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *chara* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the

leaves and stalks, and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying.* Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Rain is wanted when *sail* rice is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *dumahi* and *murali*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *sail*, *cheni champa*, and *sapri*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The *sail* is a somewhat smaller tree than the *athia*, the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and it is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *sapri* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure, but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong

Garden
crops. The
plantain.

* The best solution is 1lb Paris Green, 1lb freshly slacked lime or flour, and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of water-logging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep and are manured with ashes and sweepings. Young saplings take from eighteen months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn into fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants.

Other garden crops.

The betel nut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the villagers are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. Tobacco is generally grown by Manipuris. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are gathered in February and March. If required for chewing they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When th

tobacco is destined for the pipe, the leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach, *pui* (*basella alba*), *lai*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *uri* (*dolichos lablab*), the radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka sag* (*rumex vesicarius*) and the brinjal or *begun* (*solanum melongena*).

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean, and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average about Re. 1-4 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sail* is Rs. 24, from one of *aman* Rs. 21, and from one of *aus* Rs. 20. For mustard the villagers generally get about Rs. 2-14 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth about Rs. 17. Molasses fetch about Rs. 5 per maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth some Rs. 185.

Yield and
value of
crops.

	lbs.
Sail	1,000
Aus	800
Aman	850
Mustard	500
Molasses	2,200

Live stock.

Buffaloes are often used to drag the plough in Cachar, and are of two distinct breeds. The Manipuri buffalo is a fine upstanding animal, with wide spreading horns, and is larger and stronger than the *bangar* whose horns curve downwards and inwards. A Manipuri bull costs from Rs. 30 to Rs. 80, whereas the price of the *bangar* ranges from Rs. 20 to Rs. 50. The price of a Manipuri cow buffalo ranges from Rs. 40 to Rs. 125, and of one of the other breed from Rs. 25 to Rs. 70.

The cattle are miserable little creatures, and are some of the sorriest specimens of their kind. No attention is paid to breeding; during a portion of the year they generally go short of food, and the policy of total indifference and neglect is attended by the usual results. The Manipuri cattle, though small, are a fine and sturdy little breed, and are much appreciated by the cultivators of the Surma Valley. The goats are not much more satisfactory than the cattle, and yield little milk. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and those that are imported do not thrive. The country ponies too are wretched little beasts about 11 hands high, with neither pace, endurance, nor manners. The Manipuri pony, though small, is a very different little creature. It has astonishing endurance and considerable pace, and Manipuri ponies, with ten stone up, have run the mile in two minutes and ten seconds.* Unfortunately, good ponies are now extremely scarce even in their native valley, and comparatively few of them find their way into Cachar. A census of the live stock was taken in 1902 and disclosed the following results: Bulls and bullocks,

* Dacca Blue Book, page 371.

85,000; cows, 62,000; male buffaloes, 19,000; cow buffaloes, 28,000; young stock, 88,000; sheep, 2,000; goats, 49,000; ponies, 1,100.

During the rains, when the rice crop is on the ground Grazing. and the *haors* or swamps are under water, there is often difficulty in obtaining grazing for the cattle. They are turned out on the high land between the fields, and on the jungle-covered hills to pick up what they can, and rice straw is sometimes fed to them; but in every part of the plains there is a dearth of suitable fodder at this season of the year, and the condition of the cattle falls off very much. After the crop is cut they are allowed into the fields to browse upon the stubble, or are driven to the swamps when the water falls. In the Katigara tahsil there is a considerable area of low land that makes an excellent grazing ground in winter, the best known *haors* being the Thulang, the Talkar, the Rowar, the Dubria, and the Duba. In the hills, there is never any scarcity of grazing for the buffaloes and mithun (*bos frontalis*) which are the only cattle kept by the hill men. In this portion of the district there are a considerable number of professional graziers, Nepalese by race, who were attracted there at the time when the railway was being made. In the plains, the buffalo-keeper who lives by selling milk and *ghi* is only found in the Chatla *haor* and the Katigara tahsil, and even there he is by no means a common figure.

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent Cattle disease. in the district are foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea (*marki*), cholera,

matikhoa the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight.

Tea—
Character of
gardens.

Measured by the standard of value the most important crop that is raised in Cachar is tea. The tree was discovered growing wild in Cachar in 1855, and the first plantation was opened in mauza Barsangan in 1856. The gardens were at first laid out on the flat tops of the low spurs which project from the Barail towards the Barak. The area here available was unfortunately not large, and south of the river planters turned to undulating land and the low round-topped hills called *tilas*, which are dotted about the surface of the plain. When these hills are cleared of jungle the soil is little inferior to that of the plateaux, which is of a chocolate colour, but the surface mould is washed away by the heavy rains, and the land in consequence loses much of its fertility. In 1875, the experiment was tried of planting out tea on low marsh land which had been thoroughly drained, and it was found that the rich soil yielded an exceptionally large return of leaf. The smaller drains are placed at intervals of about 80 feet apart, and in pure peat considerable allowance has to be made for shrinkage of the soil when drained. In some cases *bil* land has sunk as much as four or five feet, and the tea has been killed by water-logging, though in its uncleared state the site seemed suitable enough. Gardens of this kind are now to be found in every part of the district except the north and the north-west, and furnish a considerable proportion of the total crop. The quality of the tea is not as good as that produced on other soils,

but at present the difference in the market price is slight.

In the early sixties tea-planting was regarded rather as a speculation than a solid industry. A saying then in vogue in Cachar was that it was very doubtful whether it would ever pay to make tea, but that there was no doubt that it would pay to make gardens; and gardens were described as being made to sell but not to pay.* “Scarcely any one interested,” says Mr. Edgar, who was Deputy Commissioner at the time, “looked forward to obtaining his return from the produce of his tea cultivation; everyone looked forward to becoming suddenly and immensely rich by getting a piece of land, planting it out with tea, and then selling it for a vastly greater sum than he had expended on it.” Gardens were sold for 700 or 800 per cent. more than they had cost to make, and in some cases the plantations when they changed hands existed only on paper. This unhealthy state of affairs soon produced its own remedy. The crash came in 1866 when many concerns collapsed, and the period of depression continued till 1869. It was then found that people who had worked steadily were making a substantial profit, and that many of the estates of the bubble companies were doing well under careful management. The area under cultivation in Cachar was said to be 24,151 acres, which yielded 4,285,000 lbs. of manufactured tea—a quantity which exceeded that produced in the neighbouring district of Sylhet even as late as 1881. By 1882, the area under plant had risen to 48,878 acres and the yield to 12,721,000

Develop-
ment of
industry.

* Papers regarding the tea industry in Bengal, Calcutta, 1873.

lbs., which was considerably in excess of that returned from any other district in the Province. The industry continued to develop, though not as rapidly as elsewhere, and in 1898 the area under plant was 62,179 acres, and the outturn 20,898,000 lbs. Then ensued a series of favourable seasons, and though there was a decrease in the cultivated area, the yield in 1901 was 31,088,000 lbs. Statistics for later years will be found in Table VII; and in Appendix A there is a statement showing the area, labour force, and position of each garden.

Labour
supply.

There is little local labour available for work on the plantations, and most of the coolies have to be brought from other parts of India. The total number so imported during the ten years ending with 1890 was 51,894, and during the next decade it was 75,412. At the present moment the supply of labour in the recruiting districts is quite inadequate, and the dearth of coolies is a source of inconvenience. Waste land suitable for the growth of rice is not, as a rule, to be found either on the grants themselves or in their neighbourhood; and coolies when they leave the gardens are compelled to settle in the remoter parts of the district, where their labour is lost to the industry. The cost of importation is considerable, and few people would be willing to expend large sums of money in bringing up labourers to the district, without some guarantee that for a time, at any rate, they would be able to retain their services. This guarantee is afforded by Act XIII of 1859, which empowers a magistrate to order a man who has taken an advance of money on account of work to be done by him, to complete his contract, and to

punish him with imprisonment if he declines to carry out this order. The number of cases in which the coolie is actually confined is, however, small.

In the early days of the industry the mortality amongst the imported coolies was extremely high, and the relations between the planters and their labour force were often far from satisfactory. The mortality in transit too was very heavy. Between May 1868 and January 31st, 1868, 52,155 coolies were imported to Cachar, of whom 2,456 or 4·7 per cent. died during the voyage. As, even at that time, the journey occupied less than a month, the rate of mortality can only be characterised as appalling. This has, however, happily been changed, and, in 1902-03, the death-rate

	Number.	Per-centage.	amongst adult coolies in Cachar was only 27 per mille.
Total ...	129,063	...	The statement in the margin
Assam ...	50,287	39	shows the areas from which
Chota Nagpur ...	21,347	16	the labour force in 1901 had
Other parts of Bengal ...	27,962	22	been recruited. Those born
U. Provinces ...	13,725	11	in Assam are, for the most part, children of immigrant
C. Provinces ...	11,921	9	coolies.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised: Varieties of plant.
 Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to 7½ inches in length by 2⅔ to 2⅞ inches in width; Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety; Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long and from 6 to 7½ inches wide; and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different

kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. The Burmese plant, which has a smaller and darker leaf than the variety found in Cachar and the Lushai Hills, is the one which is most in favour with the planters of Cachar. It comes into bearing quickly, is fairly hardy, and yields a good outturn of tea per acre. The following gardens are noted for the excellence of the seed raised on them: Kalain, Jatinga, Kasipur, Alyne, and Goabari. Owing to the period of depression through which the industry has recently been passing, the price of seed is much lower than it was and ranges from Rs. 20 to Rs. 40 per maund.

**System of
cultivation.**

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four

feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year. Only about two inches of the wood formed since the previous pruning are left, and any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. As an extreme remedy old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. Warm, moist weather is required for the proper development of the plant, but anything in the shape of waterlogging has to be carefully avoided. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of eight or nine inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes in temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable, and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view. Plucking is started at the beginning of March and is continued till Christmas. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and, in about five weeks' time, the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This

throwing out of new leaves is termed a flush, and there are usually six or seven full flushes in a season, though each bush is picked over at the height of the season every seven or eight days, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, the red spider, thread and grey blight, and red rust. A full account of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant," by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1908.

System of
manufac-
ture.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 18 hours, but, if it is cold and wet, from 36 to 40 hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. On these occasions recourse is often had to artificial withering. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about half an hour, and after this the leaf is spread out in a cool room for six hours or so to ferment. It is then rolled for another quarter of an hour and placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called orange pekoe

and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass are orange pekoe, broken pekoe, souchong, and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead-lined boxes while it is still warm. The leaf loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and green leaf yields only 28 or 24 per cent. of tea. In the case of plant grown on *bil* land the proportion is even lower.

The yield per acre is higher in Cachar than in most of the districts of Assam, and is on the average about 500 lbs. of manufactured tea. This is, however, only a rough general average, and different gardens and different seasons vary largely from this mean. A good *bil* garden will sometimes give as much as 1,400 lbs. per acre. Prices vary considerably from year to year, but the development of the industry has not unnaturally been accompanied by a great decline in the amount paid for the manufactured article. In 1868, it was said that tea would have to be sold at 2s. a pound in London to cover the cost of manufacture,* and, in 1882, the Deputy Commissioner complained that the average price had fallen to 1s. 2d. a pound., which was a serious matter as few gardens could produce their tea for less than a shilling. Since that date there has been a great reduction in the

Outturn
and prices.

* Report of the Commission appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868, p. 14.

cost of production, and, in 1908, though the average price was only $6\frac{1}{2}d.$ a pound. the results of the season were considered far from unsatisfactory.

Green tea.

Of recent years an attempt has been made to introduce the manufacture of green tea in order to meet the demands of the American market. In 1902, the Indian Tea Association offered a bounty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas on every pound of green tea manufactured. The following year this bounty was reduced by half, and nearly a million pounds of green tea were exported from Cachar. The principal difference between the manufacture of green and black tea is that the former article is not fermented. As soon as the leaf comes in, it is steamed in a drum for about half a minute; a process which turns it a bright green colour and effectually stops all fermentation. Excess moisture is then removed by a hydro-extractor or centrifugal machine, and it is then rolled, fired, and sorted into the following different grades, pinhead gunpowder, gunpowder young hyson, hyson no. i, hyson no. ii, twanky and dust. The infused leaf should be of a bright green colour, and the liquor of a very pale yellow shade. Most of this tea is sent to North America, but a small quantity is sold in the Midlands.

Forests
Area.

The forests of Cachar fall into two main classes, the reserves and the unclassified state forests. Unclassified state forest is, however, nothing more nor less than waste land at the disposal of the Government, and does not of necessity possess any sylvan characteristics. In 1908-04, the area of the reserved forests was returned as 807 square miles. The alteration in the southern boundary of the district, which was carried out in 1904, transferred a

portion of these reserves to the Lushai Hills, but they remain for departmental purposes under the forest officer stationed at Silchar. The area of unclassified state forest was 711 square miles, but this does not include the area of waste land in the North Cachar subdivision. The population of this subdivision has a density of about 12 to the square mile,* but the *jhum* system of cultivation, which from time immemorial has been practised by the inhabitants, is very unfavourable to tree growth.

The Barail reserve is situated in the North Cachar Hills, a little to the north of Maibang, and the Langting Mupa forest lies to the north of Katigara. All the other reserves are situated in the southern portion of the district, where they form a compact block, 692 miles in area, with one thin arm thrown out to Baladhan along the eastern frontier. The forests in the south are situated on low hilly country, much broken up with valleys. These hills are, for the most part, covered with mixed deciduous and evergreen forest; but where they have been *jhumed*, trees give place to bamboo scrub. Low swampy valleys are covered with canes and reeds, higher ones with tree growth. Details with regard to the area, date of constitution, and characteristics of each reserve over ten miles in area, will be found appended to this chapter. The receipts from each of these forests are shown in Table VIII.

The following are the most valuable timber trees found in the district, and the uses to which they are generally put. House posts—nagesvar (*mesua ferrea*), jarul (*lagerstroemia flos reginae*), gomari (*gmelina*

* This figure excludes the temporary railway population.

arborea), *sundi*, and *ramdala* (*duabanga sonneratioides*). Beams—*cham* (*artocarpus chaplasha*), *rata* (*dysoxylum binectariferum*), *kurta* (*isonandra polyantha*), *jhalna* (*terminalia bicolorata*), *tailo* (*castanopsis indica*), *ramdala*, *dewa* (*artocarpus lakoocha*), *poma* (*cedrela toona*), *sida* (*lagerstroemia parviflora*). Furniture—*rata kurta*, *poma*, *gundroi* (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), *cham*, *kathal* (*artocarpus integrifolia*), and *dewa*. Agricultural purposes—*gomari* and *jam* (*eugenia* sp.). Tea boxes—*tula*, *dhumboil* (*beilschmiedia sikkimensis*), *am* (*mangifera sylvatica*), *kadam* (*anthocephalus cadamba*), *simul* (*bombax malabaricum*), *sutrong*, *haris* (*albizzia stipulata*), *odal* (*sterculia villosa*), *hortuki* (*terminalia citrina*), *satri* (*alstonia scholaris*), and *sita*. Railway sleepers—*nagesvar* and *sida*. Dug-out canoes—*cham*, *poma*, and *simul*. Boats—*nagesvar*, *jarul*, *cham*, and *poma*. Firewood—*chalita* (*dillenia indica*), *sita*, and *buara*. Perfumes—*agar* (*aquilaria agallocha*).

System of
manage-
ment.

The reserved forests are under the general control of a Forest Officer, assisted by a suitable staff. In unclassified state forests, settlement holders are allowed to graze their cattle, and to remove any forest produce other than reserved trees, free of charge, provided that it is required for home consumption and not for sale. Professional herdsman pay a fee of 8 annas for each buffalo and 4 annas per head of other horned cattle.

System of
extraction.

The first step to be taken by a timber trader is to apply for a permit for the trees he wishes to extract. The trees selected are marked by an officer of the

* In the Inner Line reserve, whence most of the timber is obtained, previous marking is not required.

department, and can then be felled.* After felling they are cut up into logs, dragged to the nearest stream, made up into small rafts (*khatais*), and floated out of the forest. Trees whose specific gravity is greater than that of water are buoyed with bamboos. Lower down the river the *khatais* are made up into larger rafts (*chalis*), and taken to one of the revenue stations at Sonaimukh, Silchar, and Siyaltek. Royalty can be paid either at Silchar or Hailakandi, or at Katigara tahsil office; and, on the production of the treasury voucher, a pass is issued and the produce can be removed. Timber may not be landed before it has reached a check station, except under the written authority of the forest officer. The rates of royalty on timber in the rough vary from one to four annas per cubic foot, according to the character of the tree. On bamboos there is a duty of Rs. 2-8 per thousand.

There is a brisk trade in timber in Cachar, and from ^{Timber Trade.} Table IX it will be seen that in this district the department is able to make a profit. The outturn of timber from the unclassified state forests is, however, generally larger than that from the reserves. In 1900-01, there was a considerable revenue derived from rubber, but the trees seem to have been killed out by overtapping, and since that year very little caoutchouc has passed through Cachar. Bamboos and cane are the most valuable minor forest products in the district.

Last of Reserved Forests.

NAMES.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in sq. miles.	Date when constituted a reserve.	Name of valuable timber trees.	Routes for extraction of produce.
Upper Jiri	... Situating at the foot of the North Cachar Hills. The northern portion of the forest is hilly. The soil is a fairly light deposit of clay and sand.	24	1860	Jarul, Nagesvar, Kurta, Bata, Ping, Cham, Gundroi, Poma, &c.	Digli, Lakhichara, Sulai-khal, and Jiri rivers.
Katakhal	... East of Hailakandi valley. Central portion low and marshy, elsewhere hilly. Soil deep sandy loam.	80	1877	Jarul, Gundroi, Nagesvar, Cham, Bata, Poma, Kurta, Ping, Jhoki, Jhalna, &c.	Jalings, Goglachara, Lalachara, Dholchara, Barunchara, Rupachara, Dhaleswari, and Katakhal rivers.
Lower Jiri	... On the eastern border of the district. Hilly and in places quite rocky, with very little flat land. Soil sandy and deep red clay.	14	1878	Do. Do.	Begthal, Khapaparathal, Latingkhal, Jiri, and Barak rivers.
Barak	... Do.	69	1878	Jarul, Nagesvar, Kurta, Bata, Ping, Cham, Gundroi, Poma, &c., Betula and other higher altitude trees.	Bhubankhal, - Mohankhal, and Barak river.
Inner Line	... South of Cachar and north of Lushai Hills. Only a small portion of this enormous forest has been explored.	302	1877	Gundroi, Cham Jarul, Nagesvar, Bata, Kurta, Poma, Sundi, Jhalna, Ping, Karai, Jam, Jhoki, &c.	Barak, Tipai, Bonduang, Sonai, Rakni, Panikhal, Selganga, Barunchara, Jhalnacharakhal, Bhairabichara, and Dhaleswari river.
Langting Mupa	Neighbourhood of Ne-motha.	80	1900	Nagesvar, Sida, Poma, Gundroi, Cham, Haldi, &c.	Assam-Bengal Railway and Mupa, Langting, Doiang, Saradong, Boila and Diakho.
Barail	... In North Cachar Hills near Maibang. Very hilly, and in places rocky. Soil not very deep.	35	1902	Jarul, Gundroi, Nagesvar, Cham, Bata, Poma, Kurta, Ping, Jhoki, Jhalna, &c.	Abong, Subong, Mama-chara, Dalu, Dikhongma, Dimum, and Jalinga rivers.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Arts and industries—Lac—Weaving of cotton cloth—Eri silk—Pottery
—Saw mills—The fishing industry.

APART from tea, and two saw mills worked by European ^{Arts and industries.} capital, the industries of Cachar are of very small importance. They include weaving, the making of rough pottery, bell-metal utensils, iron hoes, daos, and simple agricultural implements, and the expressing of mustard oil. The following statement shows the number of persons in the Cachar Plains, who returned these various industries as their means of livelihood, at the censuses of 1891 and 1901. From this it is clear that they can be of but little importance in the economy of an area, which in the latter year had a population of 414, 781, souls.

	Workers in and sellers of bell-metal, etc.	Workers in and sellers of iron work.	Pressers and sellers of oil.	Makers and sellers of pots.
1891 ...	76	479	181	1,003
1901 ...	80	505	68	647

This statement would at first suggest that the oil-man's and the potter's craft were falling into disrepute,

but this is not the case. Considerably more than half the persons who practised these industries in 1891, were at the same time tillers of the soil; but in the census tables all these semi-agriculturists were shown as oil-pressers or potters as the case might be. In 1901, persons whose principal occupation was cultivation were shewn under that head, and the fact that in their leisure moments they made daos or earthen pots was disregarded. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds by Manipuris, but the total output is extremely small. Iron daos, axes, hoes, and sickles are made by Kamars from lumps of metal which they purchase from the local shopkeepers. Most of these blacksmiths are natives of Sylhet. Mustard oil is expressed by the ordinary bullock mill of Upper India. The industry has few followers outside the town of Silchar. Weaving and pottery are dealt with in the following paragraphs.

Lac.

Lac is only produced in the North Cachar Hills. It is generally reared on *vrhar* (*cajanus indicus*) and a plant called *kallibat*. The method of propagation is as follows: Pieces of stick lac containing living insects, are placed in baskets, and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days, the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months, and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed, and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the

caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the plant will destroy them altogether. The lac produced is exported in its crude state and is sold to the kaiyas of the Assam Valley.

Weaving is not practised as a home industry in the Weaving. plains of Cachar as it is in the Assam Valley, and the great mass of the rural population are dressed in the cheap fabrics of Manchester, and not in home-made cloth. The Jugi caste is strongly represented, but few of them now touch the loom, and such clothing as is produced is for the most part woven by Manipuris, Kukis, Kacharis, Nagas, and Mikirs. The whole question of weaving in this Province has been dealt with at great length in a Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam, published at Calcutta by the Superintendent of Government Printing in 1897. The system followed in the Assam Valley is described on pages 80 to 51, and this is the system adopted by the Jugis on such occasions as they think fit to return to their traditional occupation, and occasionally also by the Manipuris. An alternative Manipuri process is described on page 77 and 78, and the Kuki and Kachari methods on pages 64—66. In the absence of elaborate plans and diagrams, descriptions of mechanical processes of this character are extremely difficult to follow, and those curious in the matter should refer to the monograph itself. Any person who really wishes to understand the way in which the work is done, would, however, be well advised to study the subject in person, and on the spot.

Cotton
cloths
produced.

The following is a brief description of the more important local products of the loom. The *than* is a large, stout cloth made of white cotton thread, and used in the cold weather as a warm wrap. The ordinary size is 9' by 4' 6", but it is sometimes 18' in length and is worn double. The price ranges from As. 8 to Rs. 8. The *fanek* is a garment worn by Manipuri women. It is fastened under the arms above the bust, and reaches to a little below the knee. It is made of green or dark blue thread with red and yellow stripes, and the border is sometimes embroidered with flowers in cotton or silk. The price varies from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 7. The *khesk* is a thick cloth, either, plain or striped, used as a coverlet for a bed, as a wrapper by men, and as a petticoat by women. *Kheskes* are generally from 5' to 9' in length by 8' to 6' in breadth, and cost from As. 8 to Rs. 3. The Manipuris also weave cheap mosquito curtains which are sold for from As. 8 to Re. 1-4 a set. The Kukis weave cloths called *pal*, which are not unlike the *khesk*, and most of their clothing, like that of the Mikirs and Nagas, is home made. A speciality of theirs is the *pari*, a kind of rug made of lumps of raw clean cotton woven into a coarse stout cloth and knotted tightly between the weft. The ordinary *pari* is about 8' by 4' and costs some five rupees.

Eri silk.

The Eri silk-worm is reared by Kacharis both in the plains and in the hills, but the cloth produced is generally intended for home wear and very little comes to market. The worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor-oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are hatched out.

in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. The females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to fifteen days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor-oil plant. When fully grown they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches, which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three-quarters of their weight in thread.

The earth used by potters is generally a glutinous Pottery. clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff, some clean, coarse sand is worked up with it. A well-kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally, and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves, the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished,

and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping.

The instruments employed are the wheel (*chak*), which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*hach* or *saf*) a hollow basin about 16 inches long by $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, the mallet (*mala* or *piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The Kumhars have abandoned their traditional occupation and taken to agriculture and only manufacture a few articles in their leisure hours. The most important Kumhar villages are Joynagar, Chatla, Banraj and Kalain in the *sadr* subdivision, and Rangauti, Matijuri, Bishnupur, and Siboottar in Hailakandi. The principal articles manufactured are cooking-pots, water-jars, plates, cups, and lamps. The pottery is, however, much inferior to that imported from Bengal.

Saw mills.

Apart from tea, the only factories in which European capital is invested, are the Lakhipur saw mills at Phuler-tal, and the Barak mills at Sonaimukh. The former had an average labour force of 127 in 1904, the latter of 80. The outturn consists principally of tea boxes, for which there is a large local demand. Tea boxes are also constructed by native carpenters in Silchar.

The fishing industry.

The fishing industry is not of very great importance, and is largely in the hands of Mahimals and Dom Patnis from Sylhet. There is no trade in salt fish, and the outturn from the local fisheries has to be supplemented with

dried, and even fresh fish, brought from the *haors* and rivers of Sylhet.

The following are the nets most commonly in use :

- (1) The *pelain* is a net in the form of the letter Y which is pushed through the water by the operator, as he walks along the bed of the fishery. Price As. 6 to Re. 1.
- (2) The *jhinti* is a large variety of the *pelain* which is worked from a boat. Price Rs. 2 to Rs. 8.
- (3) The *khuti* is a square net, the opposite corners of which are fastened to the ends of two flexible bamboos which are crossed in the middle. These crossed bamboos are fixed to a stout handle by means of which the net is raised and lowered. Price Rs. 4 to Rs. 10.
- (4) The *jhaki* is a circular throw net weighted round the edge, and with a rope attached to the centre. It is thrown flat on the surface of the water, and the weights then sink and draw the outer edges of the net together. Price Rs. 3 to Rs. 6.
- (5) The *hurajal* is a drag net from 2 to 4 yards wide and 10 to 25 yards long. Price Rs. 20 to Rs. 80.
- (6) The *nupul* or Manipuri net is used both as a *khuti jal* and as a drag net, and costs from As. 8 to Rs. 8. The traps used are of two kinds. The *hogra* is a triangular shaped basket filled with twigs and brushwood, which is sunk in the bed of a stream; the *doo* is of various shapes and sizes and is worked on the principle of a lobster pot. The *polo* is like a large wicker work wine-glass which is dabbed on the mud by the person working it, any fish caught being removed through the stem.

The fisheries of Cachar are divided into two main Fisheries. classes. The Barak, the Ghagra, the Sonai Rukni, the Chiri, and thirty-six more of the larger and more important

fisheries, are put up to auction and sold to the highest-bidder. The remaining fisheries, of which there are no less than 805, are settled for a term of years with the persons who on equitable grounds appear to have the strongest claims to settlement. The revenue assessed varies from Re. 1 to Rs. 200, but in most cases is from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15. The purchaser or settlement holder of the fishery is allowed to charge the following rates on the nets or traps used. The higher rates quoted are for fisheries valued at more than Rs. 50 per annum. *Pelain*, As. 4 and As. 2; *jhinti*, As. 6 and As. 4; *khuti*, As. 12 and As. 8; *jhaki*, As. 12 and As. 8; *hura*, Rs. 5 and Rs. 4; *nupül*, As. 8, and As. 4; *hogra* and *doo*, As. 4 and As. 2; each fishing boat, Rs. 8-8 and Rs. 2.

The following are the best eating fish found in the district:—*rui* (*labeo rohita*), *chital* (*notopterus chitala*), *hilsa* (*clupea ilisha*), *sol* (*ophiocephalus striatus*), *magur* (*clarias magur*), *kai* (*anabas scandens*), *pufta* (*callichrous bimaculatus*), *vacha* (*eutropichthys vacha*).

In the hills the Kukis and Kacharis use a throw net called *len* or *jegeding* which is similar to the *jhaki* of the plains. The Kacharis also buy a long net called *jegalao* from the inhabitants of Nowgong, which they stretch across a river, so that any fish swimming up or down it become entangled in its meshes. Traps are also set at dams and in swiftly flowing water.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE, COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWNS, AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Subletting—Wages—Prices—Economic Condition of the people—Social restrictions—Communications—Railways—Roads—Inspection bungalows—Bridle paths—Ferries—Water communication—Post and Telegraph—Trade—Towns—Local Boards.

THE system under which cultivators in Cachar have been allowed to hold waste land at low rates of revenue has been favourable to the growth of a tenant class. The easy terms on which land could be obtained encouraged the early settlers to extend their holdings, and the revenue assessed has not been high enough to compel them to relinquish land they did not actually require. Statistics of subtenancy were recorded at the last settlement, and showed that in the *sadr* tahsil 18 per cent. of the land under the cultivation of ordinary crops was held by tenants; in the Hailakandi tahsil 18 per cent.; and in the Katigara tahsil 20 per cent. The total area held by subtenants according to the returns, was only 16 per cent.; but the settlement officer was of opinion that 25 per cent. would probably have been nearer to the mark.

Subletting
fairly com-
mon.

Subletting is by no means common in the older parganas and the country near Silchar, as the *mirasdars* in this portion of the district have little land to spare. Tenants are proportionately most numerous in the Banraj, Lakhipur, and Chatla Haor parganas of the *sadr* tahsil; the Vernerpur pargana in the south of the Hailakandi valley; and the Kalain, Jalalpur, and Gumra parganas in the north-west corner of the Katigara tahsil. The rents paid are said to vary from Rs. 2-4-0 to Rs. 6-12-0 per acre, and cases not infrequently occur in which landlords demand and obtain them in advance. On the other hand, abatements or remissions are allowed when there is a failure or destruction of the crop. The selling value of ordinary rice land was reported by the settlement officer to range from Rs. 60 to Rs. 185 an acre. The following figures recorded at the census of 1901 give a fairly correct idea of rural society in the plains portion of the district: Cultivating land-holders, 158,080; non-cultivating landholders, 2,109; cultivating tenants, 80,256. Dependents as well as workers are included in each case. The number of tenants suggests that the settlement officer was right in doubting the accuracy of his statistics of subtenancy. The large number of cultivating landholders shows that Cachar is still a country of peasant proprietors, and that the landlord class is still numerically a small one.

Wages.

The bulk of the inhabitants of Cachar belong to castes which in other parts of India are employed as labourers. The facilities for obtaining land have, however, been so great that they have succeeded in rising to the position of peasant proprietors, or, at any rate, of cultivators; and

labour is in consequence both scarce and dear. The total number of persons supported by general labour in the Cachar Plains at the census of 1891 was only 8,751. Ten years later it was but 4,626, or barely 1 per cent. of the total population, as compared with nearly 7 per cent. in the Province of Bengal. The natural result is that wages are extremely high. Even in 1876, a common labourer was given as much as Rs. 7 per mensem in addition to his food. The rates quoted at the present day range from Rs. 4 to Rs. 8 per mensem with food, and from Rs. 7 to Rs. 10 if the man is required to feed himself. The wage for daily labour ranges from As. 4 to As. 8 a day, but, in spite of the high rates offered, it is the common complaint that labourers are scarce and difficult to procure. In the Hailakandi subdivision it is said that though the vast majority of the people are of a very low class, they decline to work for hire, either because they are *mirasdars* themselves or the relations of *mirasdars*.

Mirasdar is a sufficiently high-sounding title, but all that it connotes is that the man in question holds direct from Government. The holding is often not more than two or three acres in extent, and the great majority of the *mirasdars* drive the plough themselves, and differ in no respects from the ordinary raiyat of the Assam Valley. By old custom, which dated from the time of the Kachari Rajas, the ownership of land carried with it the obligation to supply portorage to Government. This practice was only recently abolished, but in spite of the fact that the bulk of the *mirasdars* of Cachar belong to castes which rank low in the Hindu social

scale, that nearly all of them cultivate their land with their own hands, and that the work in question was sanctioned by ancient usage dating back to the times of native rule, the great mass of the villagers preferred to suffer pecuniary loss to undertaking work which in their estimation was degrading. It seems to have been originally the practice for the wealthier *mirasdars* to bribe their poorer neighbours to act as coolies, by the offer of a bonus ranging from Re. 1 to Re. 1-8 per day, in addition to the wage of 6 annas received from the employer. Subsequently all the labour was provided by natives of Sylhet, under the control of daffadars, who appropriated a portion of the bonus paid for the coolie. The system of impressment has been discontinued since 1904, but the enormous price paid for unskilled labour suggests that the general level of prosperity in the district must be unusually high. In the North Cachar subdivision labour is still fairly cheap, and is paid from As. 2 to As. 4 a day. When the work is given out on contract the charge for weeding an acre of land varies from Re. 1 to Rs. 2. The Kacharis are the principal employers of labour in the hills, and engage Rangkhoh or Bete Kukis, Mikirs, or Nagas. The Kacharis seldom work for hire themselves, and never except amongst their own people.

Prices.

During the last forty years there has been a marked rise in the price of rice. In the ten years ending with 1872, 20·2 seers of rice were on the average to be procured for a rupee. In the next decade, the average sank to 18·5; then to 14·9; and in the ten years ending with 1902, to 11·9. This period was, however, one of considerable

stringency; the Cachar market was no doubt affected by the prices ruling in other parts of India, and it is doubtful whether the average for the current decade will reach so high a level. Twenty-three seers of rice were, for instance, procurable for a rupee at Hailakandi during the second half of February, 1905. Rice is generally appreciably cheaper at Hailakandi than at Silchar. This is, however, probably due to the fact that Hailakandi is only a small village in a rice-growing valley. The total volume of business transacted there is very small, and in the absence of any demand in the village, prices tend to keep low. Salt has cheapened considerably of recent years, but pulse shows a steady tendency to rise. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table X.

The economic condition of the people must be considered fairly satisfactory. The soil is fertile, the rainfall regular and abundant, and the bulk of the cultivated land lies above the risk of flood. Communications are fair, and last and most important fact of all, the cultivator finds a market for his produce at the various bazars scattered about the district, to which the garden coolies come to satisfy their wants. At the time of the last re-settlement, an attempt was made to divide the villagers into the following five classes: (1) *Mirasdars* who derive their chief income from rents; (2) *Mirasdars* who sublet part of their land but are substantial cultivators themselves; (3) *Mirasdars* who cultivate the whole of their land and neither sublet nor rent; (4) *Mirasdars* who have to rent land in addition to their own holdings; (5) Tenants who own no land. Less than 2 per cent.

Economic
condition of
the people.

of the total number were included in the first two classes. Nearly two-thirds of the whole fell in the category of peasant proprietors who neither paid nor received rent, less than a seventh in Class IV., and rather more than a quarter were found to be landless tenants. The actual figures recorded, which only refer to the householders themselves and not to those dependent on them, are as follows: Class I, 78; Class II, 598; Class III, 22,494; Class IV, 5,882; Class V, 9,200. They are described by the settlement officer as having no pretensions to accuracy, though they may be taken as a fair approximation to the truth.*

Is indebted-
ness com-
mon?

The extent to which indebtedness exists is a question of some importance, but is one with regard to which it is difficult to obtain reliable information. The local revenue officers, who have been recently consulted, state that from 60 to 75 per cent. of the population are in debt; though they admit that in the majority of cases the debtor could discharge his obligations, if he would take service or do other work when not engaged on agriculture. It is difficult to believe that these statements can be correct. The land revenue assessment is light, and only amounts to Re. 1-8-5 per head; the incidence of the excise revenue was only Re. 0-8-11 per head in 1902-08; and there is a large foreign population who must, to a great extent, supply their wants from the produce of the villagers. On June 30th, 1908, there were 71,578 adult coolies in the Cachar Plains, and assuming—an estimate that seems moderate enough—that each of them

* *Vide* Cachar Re-assessment Report forwarded to the Chief Commissioner with letter No. 2987, dated 8th July, 1898, from the Officiating Director of Land Records.

spent Rs. 25 a year on the products of the district, they would put some 18 lakhs of rupees in circulation amongst the villagers. This would amount to Rs. 6-8 per head for each man, woman and child in the plains of Cachar outside tea gardens and Silchar town in 1901.

In a matter of this kind considerable weight must be attached to the opinion of the settlement officer, Rai Sarat Chandra Banerji Bahadur. His estimate differs entirely from that submitted by the local revenue officials, and on *a priori* grounds would seem to be much nearer to the truth. The settlement officer says no.

“In regard to the actual indebtedness of the people, it is not of course very easy to form an estimate. The point was one of the items set down for enquiry during the classification operations, and has been noted upon more or less carefully in regard to every village. The statement of the *mirasdars* themselves in such a matter had to be accepted with considerable reserve. Large allowances had to be made for the natural anxiety to convince the assessing officer that, generally speaking, the people were in an abject state of poverty. The fact that there were evident signs to the contrary had necessarily no deterrent effect against sweeping statements of misery, or against the assertion that, unless the rates of assessment were reduced to what they were before the current settlement, everybody would starve. Rather careful enquiries were made in the Katigara tahsil as to the number of persons actually in debt in each village, and tested by the existence of money bonds; and the result would go to show that the number of householders who had contracted debts formed about 10 per cent. of the whole, and that about a tenth of these, or 1 per cent., were rather heavily in debt.”

According to the same authority, the rate of interest varies with the amount of money borrowed. For sums under Rs. 20 the usual rate is 75 per cent., though in parts of the *sadr* tahsil it is only 60 per cent., and in the Vernerpur pargana, 48 per cent. For sums between Rs. 20 and Rs. 50, 75 per cent. is occasionally paid; but 48 or 60 per Rates of interest.

cent. is the more usual rate. For loans of between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100, the rate varies from 80 to 60 per cent., and is usually about 48 per cent. Money is borrowed for the purpose of paying for a wife, or land, or cattle, or lawyer's fees, and sometimes to pay land revenue. The last-named obligation is, however, usually discharged by the sale of surplus paddy, vegetables, poultry, goats, and even cattle. In 1902, the Deputy Commissioner reported that there had been a marked advance in the economic condition of the district. Ready-made coats and shirts had come into common use, and there was a large demand for boots, umbrellas, cigarettes, and other foreign luxuries. Judged from some points of view the standard of comfort is still perhaps not high. The food eaten by the villagers is cheap and simple; their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated; their dress is not elaborate or costly. It seems, however, fairly clear that the wealth-producing capacities of the people are but slightly taxed, and that they have a great reserve of labour still untapped. A large proportion of the villagers grow little else but rice, and it is obvious that it does not take a full year's work to raise a harvest of that cereal. In a district where, a couple of years ago, a cooly impressed for Government could earn from one-and-a-half to two rupees a day, it is difficult to believe that there could be much of poverty or debt.

North
Cachar.

The economic condition of the Kacharis, Nagas, and Jansen Kukis, is described as satisfactory. They grow enough rice to last them through the year, there are patches of sugarcane and vegetables round their houses, and in the semi-permanent Naga villages there are

gardens of guavas, mangoes, pomegranates, and peaches. The Mikirs, who are, however, a comparatively small community, are said to be most improvident and unthrifty and to be nearly all of them in debt. Their creditors are the Kaiyas of Assam, who give them advances and buy their cotton at much below the market value. Neither they nor the Rangkhoh Kukis grow enough rice to last them through the year, and the quantity of opium they consume is a very serious drain on their resources.

There seem to be few restrictions on trades and handicrafts in Cachar. Jugis have almost entirely given up their traditional occupation of weaving, with the idea that this abstention will raise them in the social scale. In the Assam Valley a large part of the clothing worn by the people is made at home, but in Cachar the Manipuris are the only persons who utilize the leisure hours of their women in this way. The rearing of silkworms is said to be restricted to the Kacharis, and in this way another useful source of wealth is closed to the people of the plains.

Prior to the construction of the Assam-Bengal Railway, communications with the outside world were kept up by steamer. During the rainy season big steamers came up the Barak to Silchar, but in the cold weather there is often barely three feet of water in the channel, and at this season of the year the journey from Calcutta to Silchar occupied five days. On the opening of the railway, this slow and irksome journey was reduced at once to 88 hours, passengers travelling by steamer from Chandpur to Goalundo, and thence by the Eastern Bengal State Railway to Calcutta. The steamer service

Social
restrictions

Communica-
tions.
Steamers.

is still maintained, the vessels being owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Company and the Rivers Steam Navigation Company. The ports of call in Cachar for the large steamers which ply on the Barak are Badarpur, Siyaltek, Jatingamukh, and Masimpur. In the rains, feeder steamers go up the Barak from Silchar to Lakhipur; up the Madhura to Chandighat; up the Ghagra to the Hattia rocks; and up the Katakhal to Kukichara.

Railways.

The Assam-Bengal Railway enters the district at a point a little to the east of Badarpur junction, which is 252 miles from Chittagong. Here the line divides, and a branch line runs south of the Barak, past Katakhal, Salchapra, and Ghagra to Silchar, which is 18 miles from Badarpur. The main line after leaving the junction crosses the Barak on a magnificent bridge, which is 454 yards in length, and had the foundations of its piers carried to a depth of 80 feet below the bed of the river. It then winds its way up the Jatinga valley, and so makes its way through the North Cachar Hills into Assam. The following is a list of the stations in the district north of the Barak; the figures in brackets show the mileage from Chittagong: Bihara (262); Damchara (271); Harangajao (283); Jatinga (294); Haflang (308); Mahur (312); Maibang (327); Langting (343); Hathikhali (355). Luming in the Nowgong district, which is the junction for the Gauhati branch, is 12 miles beyond Hathikhali.

The Hill section runs for the most part through shale of the worst description, often intermixed with bands of kaolinite, which swells when exposed and causes

heavy slips ; or exerts immense pressure on the sides of tunnels. To counteract this pressure, very heavy masonry was required ; cuttings had to be arched in, and special measures taken to allow the drainage to escape. Though the hill section is only 118 miles in length, it contains 24 tunnels, 7 covered ways, and 74 major bridges, the longest being 650 feet, the highest 118 feet above the river bed ; while many of the banks and cuttings approach 100 feet in height and depth respectively. Apart from the special engineering difficulties, great inconvenience was experienced, owing to the absence of local labour and food supplies, and to the unhealthiness of the country traversed. At one time in addition to the railway material, food for over 25,000 men had to be carried into the hills on elephants, bullocks, ponies, and other pack animals. The result is that the cost of construction of the hill section has been extremely heavy. In the plains, the railway has brought Cachar, which, prior to 1898, was a remote and isolated district, within easy reach of Calcutta. In the hills it has already begun to attract settlers to the valleys of the Jatinga, the Doiang, and the Mahur ; but it has not yet been open long enough for its effects to be fully felt.

The heavy rainfall combined with the extraordinary- Roads. ly tenacious character of the clay, has always rendered the question of road communications a serious problem in Cachar. In 1858, there was only one road in the district, and that had not been repaired for years.* In 1866 there were six roads under the ferry fund board,

* Statistical Account of Assam by W. W. Hunter, Vol. II, page 425.

which had an aggregate length of between 50 and 60 miles.* In 1904, there were altogether 201 miles of road and 193 miles of bridle path in the plains portion of the district. In spite of the existence of all these miles of cart road, goods are still, to a great extent, carried by cooly or pack bullock. In the matter of wheeled traffic, the inhabitants of the Surma Valley have shown a singular lack of initiative and enterprise. Driving roads have been in existence for many years, yet in 1902 there were only 260 carts in Cachar, as compared with upwards of 3,500 in the district of Darrang. In this respect their neighbours on the east have put them quite to shame. Carts were first sent into Manipur in 1896, the people were not slow to grasp the advantage of wheeled transport, and a few years later there were no less than 1,700 carts plying between Imphal and the Assam Valley.

Principal
roads in
Plains.

The trunk road enters Cachar at Badarpur, 51 miles from Sylhet, and crosses the Manipur frontier at Jirighat, 40 miles from Badarpur. There are dâk bungalows at Badarpur, Salchapra, and Silchar, and inspection bungalows at Salchapra, Lakhipur, Jirighat and Banskandi. Most of the minor streams are bridged, but ferries ply across the following rivers; the figure in brackets represents the mileage from Badarpur: Dhaleswari (2); Pola (8); Katakhal (6); Ghagra (12); Barak (20); Chiri (27); and Jiri (40). From Silchar, a driving road runs south, then turns west and passes Hailakandi, and finally runs due north till it meets the trunk road a little to the east

* Dacca Blue Book, page 366.

of Badarpur. North of Hailakandi, the Burnimukh road takes off on the east to Salchapra railway station. South of Hailakandi, two roads, which ultimately merge in one and sink to the status of a bridle path, run towards the Lushai Hills, and there are numerous minor roads and bridle paths branching off east and west, which have been constructed to serve the various tea gardens in the vicinity. East of Silchar there is the Maniarkhal road, which is not fit for wheeled traffic after Sonaimukh, and several bridle paths. North of the Barak there is the Natwanpur bridle path, which runs westward to the Jaintia Parganas, the Damchara, Nemotha, Sibarbund, and Baladhan paths, with various other minor paths branching from them. The road system is, however, too complicated to be described in detail, and can be more readily understood by referring to the map which accompanies this volume.

In addition to the ones already mentioned, there are inspection bungalows at Bikrampur and Gumera on the Natwanpur road; at Barkhala on the Jatinga valley road; at Tikalpur on the Durganagar road; at Udharband on the Scottpur Udharband road, at Sonaimukh on the Maniarkhal road; at Narainpur on the Burnimukh road, at Lala, Katlichara, Jalinga, and Maragang on the Jhalnachara road; and at Kanglai on the Aijal road.

In the North Cachar Hills there is a bridle path from Haflang to the hot springs, which is continued through Jowai to Shillong. There are rest-houses at the following places; the figures in brackets show the mileage from Haflang: Gunjong (16); Derebara ($24\frac{1}{2}$); Baga (32); Khorungma ($40\frac{1}{2}$); Hot springs (52). From

Inspection
Bungalows.

Paths in
North
Cachar.

Gunjong there is a bridle path to Doiangmukh (42 miles), and from Doiangmukh to the hot springs (40 miles). There are no rest-houses on either of these paths. From Maibang a bridle path runs to Baladhan, 56 miles away, with rest-houses at Guilong (8 miles), Laishung ($17\frac{1}{2}$ miles), and Hangrum ($26\frac{1}{2}$ miles). From Laishung a path strikes eastward to the border of the Naga Hills district 21 miles away.

Ferries.

The extreme rapidity with which the rivers rise after rain, renders the construction of permanent bridges over the larger streams a matter of some difficulty and of great expense. Ferries are in consequence largely used, and there are over 100 in the plains portion of the district. In the cold weather, when the rivers fall, they are often spanned by temporary bamboo bridges.

In addition to the lines of steamers to which reference has been already made, country boats play an important part in the transport business of the district. They are of the ordinary heavy type which covers the rivers and streams of Eastern Bengal. The following statement shows the navigable rivers of the district, and the highest point to which a boat of four tons burthen can proceed in the rains and in cold weather :—

NAME OF RIVER.	HIGHEST POINT TO WHICH BOAT OF 4 TONS BURTHEN CAN PROCEED.	
	In cold weather.	In rains.
Amjur	Not navigable	Up to Thaukim punji.
Badri	do.	Narainpur Tea Estate.
Barak	Tipaimukh	Kacharballi.
Bohali	Not navigable	Thaukim punji.
Chiri	do.	Joypur bazar.
Dalu	do.	Dalugram Tea Estate.
Dhaleswari Katakhal	do.	Bhairabicharamukh.
Ghagra	do.	Barajalinga bazar.
Jatinga	do.	Balichara Tea Estate.
Madhura	do.	Pathichara Tea Estate.
Mara Dhaleswari ...	do.	Ainakhal Tea Estate.
Rukni	do.	Lushai boundary.
Salganga	do.	Derby Tea Estate.
Sonai	Maniarkhal Tea Es- tate.	Chhotanatia.

The following statement shows how enormous was the development of postal business during the last forty years of the century; nearly 35 letters and post-cards being delivered in 1908-04 for every one that came to hand in 1861-62:—

Number of post offices in 1903-04.	Number of letters and post- cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank accounts in		Balance at the credit of the de- positors.	
	1861-62.	1870-71.	1903-04.	18 71-72.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04.
30	20	71	694	11	3,808	Rs. 6,300	Rs. 7,08,000

The mail is brought by the Assam-Bengal Railway from Calcutta to Silchar, and distributed by runners to the different post offices in the plains. A statement showing the places at which post and telegraph offices are situated will be found in the Appendix.

The savings bank has also made much progress, and considering the low rate of interest allowed and the scarcity of capital in the district, the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures given for 1872 were returned after the bank had only been open for a short time; but on the data then before him the Collector hazarded the opinion that the bank was not likely to succeed at all.

**External
Trade.**

The import trade is chiefly in the hands of foreign shopkeepers, the most important articles brought into the district being rice, which is required for the large cooly population, flour, betel-nuts, salt, sugar, *ghi*, cotton piece-goods, kerosine oil, coal, and iron and steel. The only important articles of export are tea, which is shipped direct from the gardens, and timber and other forest produce. More than half of the total weight of the trade still (1903-04) enters or leaves the district by water. Manipur exports to Cachar timber and other forest produce, cattle, and Indian piece-goods; and receives in return European piece-goods and twist, dried fish, and betel-nuts. Forest produce is floated down the rivers. Other articles are carried on men's backs or sometimes on pack bullocks.

**Internal
Trade.**

The internal trade of the district is carried on at markets which are held on certain specified days in the week, at the more important of which there are generally

several permanent shops. After Silchar itself, where there are upwards of 470 shops, the principal business centres are Udhharband on the Madhura river, Sonaimukh at the junction of the Sonai and the Barak in the Sonapur pargana, and Barkhala near the Jatinga river. A list of the bazars, showing the days of the week on which they are held, and a list of all places in which there are three or more permanent shops will be found in the Appendix. Most of the shopkeepers are natives of Sylhet, Bengal, or the United Provinces, and very few of the indigenous inhabitants of the district have attempted to appropriate any portion of the profits that accrue from retail trade. The number of Marwari merchants is also very small. The village shopkeeper usually deals in grain and pulse, *ghi*, oil, sugar, molasses, salt, tobacco, spices, umbrellas, and piece-goods. The villagers come to the bazars on market days, bringing with them rice or paddy, fruit, vegetables, goats, and poultry. In addition to the weekly markets, a large fair is held every year in March on the north bank of the Barak opposite Badarpur. Upwards of 15,000 people are said to attend, and there is a considerable amount of business done.

Silchar is the only place in the district which has any pretensions to the name of town. It is situated on the left bank of the Barak in 24°49'N. and 92°48'E. and commands a charming view down the river, which is dotted with the sails of native craft and lined with groves of the areca palm, while, a little to the north, the purple hills of North Cachar rise sharply from the plain.

The town itself has a somewhat tumble-down

Towns:
Silchar.

appearance, and, with the exception of the church and the new circuit house, does not contain a single building of any size or dignity. The houses of the Europeans stand round a piece of open ground, which becomes very wet and swampy in the rains. The business quarter lies a little to the south, but there are few substantial merchants in Silchar. There is a considerable trade in rice, European piece-goods, timber, and other forest produce. Tea boxes are manufactured by native firms, and there is a small printing-press, at which a vernacular paper is published. The place has been growing steadily in size during the last thirty years, the population at the last four enumerations being 1872, 4,925; 1881, 6,567; 1891, 7,528; and 1901, 9,256. As in most of the other towns in Assam the bulk of the population is of foreign birth. Silchar was constituted a municipality under Act V (B.C.) of 1876 in 1898. There are twelve commissioners, eight of whom are non-officials and are elected, while four are nominated, and two hold office *ex-officio*. The principal tax imposed is one ranging from $6\frac{1}{4}$ to $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the annual value of holdings. From Table XVII it will be seen that much of the municipal revenue has been raised from the fees levied in the market and at the ferry, and from grants from other funds. The total area of Silchar is 2.4 square miles, and it is served by 18 linear miles of road, 10 of which are metalled. The town is lighted by 98 lamps, and there are three reserved tanks and four wells from which drinking water can be obtained.

Hailakandi. Hailakandi is not large enough to be dignified by the name of town. It contains the subdivisional court,

thana, and lock-up, a dispensary, high school, and tahsil office, but the total population of the place in 1901 was only 1,838 souls. It is, in fact, simply a small village surrounded on every side by rice fields.

Haflang is situated on the top of a hill, 3,117 feet **Haflang.** above the level of the sea, on the north side of the main section of the Barail range. The subdivisional magistrate's court was transferred to this place from Gunjong in 1896, as it then began to acquire considerable importance as the headquarters of the hill section of the Assam-Bengal Railway. The station is prettily laid out, and commands a fine view of some of the highest peaks of the Barail, whose summits are nearly 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. The place is, however, entirely a creation of the railway, and apart from the presence of the Subdivisional Officer and his staff, has no importance.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was **Local Boards.** entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and, in 1875-76, the total income of

the district funds of the province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1908-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, and the Subdivisional Officer is Chairman of the Hailakandi Board. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, except the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from provincial funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XXII.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Native system of land revenue administration and early British settlements—The settlement of 1884—The settlement of 1900—Expansion of settled area since 1830—Waste land available for settlement—Disforestation—Different forms of land tenure—Incidence of land revenue—Land revenue collection—Town lands—Opium—Country spirit—Ganja—Laopani—Income-tax—Stamps—Public works—General administration—Criminal and civil justice—Registration—Volunteering—Police—Jail—Education—Medical.

THE following account of the revenue system of Cachar ^{Land revenue.} under native rule, and of the earlier settlements made by British officers, is reproduced from the Statistical Account of Cachar by Sir W. W. Hunter :—

The following paragraphs are mainly condensed from the 'Annual Report on the Revenue Administration of Cachar for 1871-72':—The first settlement of Hindus in the District is placed about 200 years ago, in the reign of Raja Suradarpa Chandra. The tradition runs that in his reign, an Assami Hindu named Bikram Rai was sent from the capital of Dimapur into that part of Cachar now known as Bikrampur, to encourage the settlement of Bengali immigrants from the west. Among other founders of colonies, the names are mentioned of Asu Thakur from Pratapghar in Sylhet, and the ancestor of the family now represented by Gulal Khan Chaudhari from Tipperah. By the time that Kartik Chandra came to the throne, the number of

colonists was very considerable. At first the rents were extremely low, the earliest mentioned rates being a he-goat, a pair of fowls, a duck, and two cocoanuts from each holding, irrespective of its size. Subsequently the rent was fixed at 12 annas for each *hal* (about 4d. per acre). Kartik Chandra raised the rate for the *hal* to Rs. 3; and it is said that Gobind Chandra, the last of the Cachar Rajas, obtained from some lands as much as Rs. 6 per *hal*, or about 2s. 6d. per acre. The lands, which of course were originally under jungle, were settled not with individuals, but with corporations called *rajs*. Each *raj*, again, was subdivided into minor corporations or *khels*, which formed the real units of the revenue system. Each individual in the *khel* was held jointly and severally liable for the revenue assessed on the *khel*, and similarly each *khel* was responsible for the payments of its *raj*. The *khel* elected its own mouthpiece, known as a *mukhtar*. Certain portions of the area allotted to each *khel* was appropriated rent-free to persons of standing; and of the lands remaining, every man received as much as he could cultivate. The system of rent-free grants was discontinued by Gobind Chandra, but the influence and recognised position of the grantees endured long afterwards. In the early days of British administration the chief titles within the *khel* were sold by Government at the following rates:—*Chaudhari*, Rs. 100; *mazumdar*, Rs. 75; *lashkar*, Rs. 60; *bara-bhuiya*, Rs. 50; *majar-bhuiya*, Rs. 25. The head-men of the *raj* and *khel* were primarily responsible for the revenue, which was collected in the following fashion:—A Cachari peon was sent to the house of the head-man with a demand for payment. The head-man then sounded a drum, or fired a gun if the demand was urgent. When the people came together the revenue was forthwith collected. Defaulters, after being allowed a short respite, were arrested and brought before the Raja. If it appeared that they had no means, the sharers in the *taluk*, or separate estate, were invited to enter upon the defaulter's land, on condition of satisfying the arrears. If they declined, the holding was given to the *khel*. If the *khel* failed to pay, the land lapsed to the *raj*, which could not refuse. In no case were outsiders admitted. The term *khel* was also applied to certain localities, which either had to supply the Raja with certain definite commodities, such as betel-nuts or firewood, or the rents of which were assigned to certain functionaries of State. Thus *Paikan khel* was the name of an estate, the rent of which was devoted to the expenses of worshipping the goddess Ran Chandi; *Vishnughar khel* was appropriated to Lakshmi Narayan; *Bhisingsa khel*, to Shama or Kali.

Cachar lapsed to the British in 1830, and Captain Fisher assumed charge of the District in July of that year. He continued the native revenue system which he found in force. The terms were that for all cleared lands revenue should be paid at the rate of *sikka* Rs. 4-12, or Company's Rs. 5-2 per *kulba* or *hal* (about 2s. per acre); *bari* or the sites of houses, *chara* or garden-lands, and tanks, etc., were altogether exempt; while jungle was revenue-free for the first 1,000 days of its occupation, and then assessed at rates varying from Rs. 2-12 to Rs. 3-8 per *hal* (1s. 1d. to 1s. 5d. per acre). Captain Fisher appears to have made a rough survey of the cultivated lands under his charge, by which a total of 20,663 acres were assessed at *sikka* Rs. 20,101, equivalent to Company's Rs. 21,441, leaving an additional area of about 9,000 acres revenue-free as *baksha*, *debottar*, etc.

About the year 1834 there ensued a series of unusually wet seasons. The people were unable to cultivate their fields, and the revenue fell into heavy arrears. The attention of the Board of Revenue was called to the high rates of assessment, and in 1838 Major Burns, who had succeeded to the office of Superintendent on Captain Fisher's death, was instructed to make a new settlement on more easy terms. This settlement was based on Captain Fisher's imperfect survey. The period was for five years, terminating in April 1843. The highest rate of rice-land was Rs. 3 per *hal* (about 1s. 3d. per acre); the rent for *chara* land was fixed at Rs. 2-8 per *hal* (about 1s. per acre); *bari* land remained revenue-free as before; while jungle land was settled revenue-free for 1,000 days, and thereafter at the current rates. The area assessed was 36,430 acres, of which 6,261 acres were jungle; the revenue fixed was Rs. 24,974, rising to Rs. 26,985 at the expiration of the term of settlement.

In 1841 Lieutenant (now General) Thuillier was deputed to survey the District, and the work was finished by the close of the following year. This survey comprised an area of 182,378 acres. The lands bordering the principal rivers and streams, to which cultivation was then limited, were actually measured and divided into 241 *mauzas*. For the rest, arbitrary lines were cut through the jungle, so far as it was reasonably supposed that the work of reclamation would extend in the immediate future; and the tracts included within these lines were marked on the map as *dags*. Great difficulties afterwards followed when the area of these *dags* was taken up for cultivation. The tea grants for the most part lay beyond the limits of the survey, and each grant when subsequently made was constituted an independent *mauza*.

In 1842, Deputy Collector Galak Chandra Rai Bahadur was specially deputed from Sylhet to make the new settlement which is known by his name. The term was to be for fifteen years; the rates fixed by the expiring settlement for cultivated lands were to be continued; the old settlement-holders were to be recognised; and the work was to be conducted in accordance with the results of the survey just completed. The Rai Bahadur's settlement comprised an area of 97,904 acres, of which 30,043 were jungle-lands; the revenue was fixed at Rs. 43,146, rising ultimately to Rs. 58,518. Both *chara* and *bari* lands were assessed at rates varying from Rs. 3 to Rs. 2 per *hal* (1s. 3d. to 10d. per acre); but all *lakhiraj* granted before the District came under British administration was strictly respected. Jungle land was assessed rent-free for the first five years, at Re. 1-8 per *hal* (7d. per acre) for the next five years, and at full rates for the concluding five years of the term. At the termination of the rent-free period, it was found that the *miras-dars* had taken up more jungle than they were able to cultivate. They were accordingly permitted by the Board of Revenue to relinquish portions of their holdings upon terms. But the reduction in the total of the revenue caused by such relinquishments was more than compensated by additional settlements of jungle-land, made from time to time to expire with the currency of the fifteen years' settlement. The number of new estates thus added was 1,458, with an area of 35,288 acres, and a revenue of Rs. 20,302. The general result was that in 1854-55, there were altogether 7,773 estates on the rent-roll of the District, paying a revenue of Rs. 67,660.

In 1855-56 Major Verner, who was then in charge of Cachar, effected the settlement of certain tracts of jungle land for a period of fifteen years, at rates varying from 4 annas to Rs. 3 per *hal*. Some of the terms of this settlement do not expire until the year 1879. Altogether 972 estates were settled by Major Verner, with an area of 70,216 acres, and an ultimate revenue of Rs. 37,123. By this means, when the Rai Bahadur's settlement expired in 1857-58, the total land revenue amounted to Rs. 81,676.

In 1858-59 a new settlement of the District was undertaken by Captain Stewart, the expiring settlement having been in the interval provisionally extended for one year. The new term was for twenty years, which will not expire until 1879. The proceedings were based upon Lieutenant Thuillier's survey; and a native surveyor, or *amin*, was deputed to measure lands not included in the map. For purposes of assessment all the cultivated lands were divided into two classes, according to their

productive powers. The rates at which first-class land was assessed ranged from Rs. 3-8 to Rs. 2 per *hal* (about 1s. 5d. to 10d. per acre), according to advantages of situation; and those at which second-class land was assessed, from Rs. 3 to Rs. 1-8 per *hal* (about 1s. 3d. to 7d. per acre). Jungle-producing thatching grass and reeds was settled at the full rates charged for cultivated lands in the same neighbourhood. Forest land that required much clearing was settled rent-free for the first three years, and then at rates gradually rising to the full rates charged for adjacent land. The number of estates was reduced by amalgamation from 8,470 to 6,120, covering an area of 132,542 acres, and paying a minimum revenue of Rs. 90,631. These figures are exclusive of the jungle land settled previously by Major Verner. Fresh settlements of jungle land were made from time to time for periods terminating with Major Stewart's settlement in 1879.

Preparations for the next settlement were commenced in the cold weather of 1878-79, but the work was not completed till 1884. Each of the three tahsils of Silchar, Katigara, and Hailakandi, was divided into four circles, and rates were fixed in accordance with the assessment capacity of each circle. The rates for the first circle were the same in each tahsil, but for the other circles, there was a considerable difference between the tahsil rates, *e.g.*, fourth circle homestead land paid Rs. 6 per *hal* in Halikandi, but only Rs. 4-12 in Katigara. Land was divided into four classes: (1) homestead and garden; (2) cultivation, including land under san-grass; (3) tea; and (4) waste. The rate for tea varied from Rs. 6 to Rs. 7-2 per *hal*, and waste was uniformly assessed at Re. 1 per *hal*, or 8 annas 4 pies per acre. The acre rates assessed on homestead varied from 15 annas 9 pies to Re. 1-11-0, and on cultivation other than tea, from 12 annas 8 pie to Re. 1-7-6. The total increase of revenue brought out by the settlement

The settle-
ment of
1884.

was Rs. 60,000 or nearly 88 per cent. The cost of the operations was Rs. 3,63,000, which swallowed up the whole of the enhancement for the first six years.

The settle-
ment of
1900.

The current settlement, which was carried out between the years 1894 and 1899, came into force in April 1900, and will expire in 1915. In imposing rates, a distinction was drawn between land under rice and land under ordinary staples other than rice, and the village was, to some extent, abandoned as the unit of assessment, distinctions being drawn between good and bad rice land in the same village. The class of the village was, however, usually held to be the same as the class of the bulk of the rice-land of which it was composed; and homestead and land growing other crops than rice, followed the village class. The following statement shows the rates assessed per *bigha*,* and the proportion of land of each description falling in each class:—

	HOMESTEAD.		RICE.		OTHER CROPS.		WASTE.	
	Rate per bigha.	Percentage of total in.	Rate per bigha.	Percentage of total in.	Rate per bigha.	Percentage of total in.	Rate per bigha.	Percentage of total in.
	As.		As.		As.		As.	
Class I ...	13	46	11	42	8	37	2	} 38
„ II ...	11	28	9	30	7	30	1	
„ III ...	8	17	7	19	5	19	...	} 60
„ IV ...	6	9	5	8	4	14	...	
„ V ...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...

* One acre is equivalent to 3.025 *bighas*.

The gross increase of revenue amounted to Rs. 1,48,944 or nearly 47 per cent., but in the greater part of the district the whole of this enhancement was not brought into force at once. In all villages in which the increase was as much as 88 per cent., the enhancement was spread over a period of either eight or twelve years. The total cost of the settlement was Rs. 8,92,000, which absorbed the whole of the increase of revenue for the first four years of its currency. An important feature of this settlement was the breaking up of the joint *mahals* owned by co-parcenary bodies, into *raiayatwari* holdings of the ordinary type. The change was appreciated by the people, and was carried out without difficulty.

The following statement shows in a concise form the area covered by each successive settlement and the initial revenue demand:—

Expansion
of settled
area since
1830.

	1830.	1838.	1848.	1859.	1884.	1900.
Settled area, acres ...	20,663	36,430	97,904	132,542	252,645	378,464
Revenue, Rs. ...	21,411	24,974	43,146	90,631	2,22,730	4,00,672

It is a noticeable fact that, though the acreage assessment in 1900 was higher than that imposed at most of the preceding settlements, it is almost identical with that in force no less than 70 years before. The enormous increase that has occurred in the settled area, is obscured by the fact that the above table only takes account of land actually under re-settlement at the time. It does not include revenue-free grants, or the estates that had been settled in fee simple, or under leases which

had still some time to run. The total settled area of the district in 1880 was 29,852 acres, but by 1902-08 it had risen to 607,466 acres, that is to say, in the comparatively short space of 72 years it had increased more than twenty-fold.

Settled
waste land.

Cachar differs from Assam Proper in the fact that waste land is held on specially low rates. In the Brahmaputra Valley land settled under the ordinary rules pays full rates of revenue whether under crop or not; and the result is that very little waste is held under ordinary patta.* In 1900, it was found that nearly 84 per cent. of the land held by ordinary villagers in Cachar was waste, and over 70 per cent. of the land included in the tea estates. The proportion of waste in the settled area of the district as a whole was no less than 51 per cent. The Settlement Officer was, however, of opinion that the great bulk of the waste land settled under ordinary lease was more or less unculturable, and was only fit for grazing or the growth of fuel.

Waste land
available
for settle-
ment.

The existence of a low rate for waste must obviously act as an inducement to take up land, and to retain it as long as there is any hope of bringing it under the plough, and the result is that the proportion of culturable land which is still unsettled is very small. The following statement shows the percentage of the total area of each tahsil at the last settlement which was (a) unsettled, and (b) classed not only as unsettled but also as culturable :—

* Nowgong, 1902-08. Total area settled at full rates excluding land settled with planters, 199,383 acres. Net cropped area excluding land cropped with tea, 197,273 acres.

		Percentage of total area unsettled.	Percentage of total area unsettled and culturable.
Silchar	tahsil ...	... 12.16	6.0
Katigara	,, ...	... 13.07	4.6
Hailakandi	,, ...	... 7.86	3.2

The expression culturable is, however, somewhat loosely used, and the Settlement Officer admits that the only parganas in which there is really any unsettled land which is fit for cultivation, are Davidsonabad, Bhuvan Hills, and Lakhipur, all of which lie on the outskirts of the *sadr* tahsil. There is a considerable area of so-called culturable unsettled land in parganas Haritikar and Lebherputa in the Katigara tahsil, and near the Chatla *haor*, but consisting as it does of marsh and fen, it would not do for permanent cultivation or habitation, though parts of it might perhaps afford a cold-weather crop.

There can be little doubt that there is a real and <sup>Disforesta-
tion.</sup> genuine demand for land in Cachar. To meet this demand, steps were taken to throw open to cultivation a portion of the forest reserves which occupy so large a proportion of the district. In 1896, the Dhaleswari reserve, which covered an area of 22,164 acres in pargana Vernerpur, was disforested.* Unfortunately a great part of this forest proved to be quite unfit for cultivation, and only about 7,000 acres were available for settlement. About 4,000 acres had been allotted by April 1st, 1902,

* The figure 22,164 acres includes two villages covering an area of 1,893 acres settled on the same terms.

the rates charged being 12 annas an acre for flat and 8 annas an acre for hilly land, with a revenue-free period of three years. In the following year 8,600 acres of the Barak reserve, which covered altogether an area of 75 square miles, were declared available for settlement. Only 1,300 acres were found to be fit for cultivation, and almost the whole of this area was very soon allotted. No revenue was charged for the first three years of the lease, but on the expiry of this period the land was assessed at the rate of 15 annas an acre. Two years later 6,728 acres, or more than half the total area of the Sonai reserve, were disforested. The greater part of this land was, however, included within the boundaries of a grant and had been wrongly formed into a reserve; and only about 1,800 acres were available for settlement. Practically the whole of this was allotted without delay. Similar concessions were made in the same year with regard to 10,500 acres of the huge Inner Line reserve, which covered an area of 509 square miles in the south-east corner of the district. The greater part of this land was reported to be culturable, and nearly 7,000 acres had been allotted by May 1st, 1902. Both of these settlements were made at the rate of 15 annas an acre. The net result of these operations was that about 18,600 acres were rendered available for settlement, of which 18,600 acres had been allotted by April 1st, 1902.

Various
forms of
tenure.

In the Assam Valley it has been for many years the policy of Government to settle waste land on favourable terms for the growth of tea, but this concession was not extended to those who wished to cultivate the ordinary staples of the Province. No such restriction was

originally in force in Cachar, and in the preceding pages it has been shewn that the practice of allowing a revenue free period when settling waste land, dates from the time when the British first took possession of the district. In 1864, the *Jangalburi* or waste land reclamation lease rules were sanctioned. For the first three years the land was revenue-free, during the next fifteen the rates varied from 8 annas to 12 annas an acre, and during the last twelve years the assessment was Re. 1-8 per acre. On the expiry of the lease the lessee, or his successor in interest, could only claim resettlement of such portion of the land as had been already cleared and cultivated, unless he had succeeded in bringing three-fourths of the estate under cultivation, when he was entitled to resettlement of the whole. In 1875, these rules were revised, and the term of the lease reduced to 20 years. The rates imposed were 2 years, revenue-free; 4 years at 8 annas per acre; four years at 6 annas per acre, and 10 years at 12 annas per acre; and the clearance conditions were withdrawn. On the expiry of these leases the land was resettled at the full rates prevailing in the neighbourhood. The rules were superseded by those issued in 1894, which are still in force. A revenue-free period is no longer allowed except under the special orders of the Chief Commissioner, and theoretically the land becomes liable to assessment as soon as it has been taken up. A revenue-free period and reduced rates have, however, been granted to all settlers in the disforested area, and the number of new settlements of land in other portions of the district is necessarily small.

Special
rules for
settlement
of tea lands

The first rules to be introduced into Cachar for the grant of land for tea cultivation, were the old Assam rules of 1854, which were extended to the district in 1856. One-fourth of the grant was exempted from assessment in perpetuity. The remaining three-fourths were granted revenue-free for 15 years, and then assessed at 8 annas an acre for 10 years and at 6 annas an acre for 74 years more, the total lease being thus for 99 years. Large tracts of land were taken up under these rules, but most of the owners took advantage of the permission accorded to them under the fee simple rules, to convert their leases into a fee simple tenure, and the total area now held under the 99-years' lease rules of 1854 is 25,728 acres.

The fee
simple rules

The fee simple rules were first issued in 1861 and modified in the following year. Except under special circumstances grants were limited to an area of 8,000 acres, the land was put up to auction, and the upset price ranged from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 10 per acre. These rules were in force till 1872. In 1874, revised fee simple rules were issued which raised the upset price to Rs. 8 per acre; but they were superseded by the thirty years' lease rules of 1876. In 1902-08, 142,751 acres of land were held in Cachar on fee simple tenure.

The thirty
years' lease
rules.

Under the thirty years lease rules the land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, and is held for two years revenue-free. It then pays 8 annas an acre for the next four years, and 6 annas an acre for another four. For the next ten years it pays 8 annas, and for the last ten years of the lease Re. 1 per acre. The total area held on thirty years' lease in 1902-08 was only 5,038 acres, planters

in many cases having preferred to take up land under the *Jangalburi* rules of 1882 which did not differ materially from the rules of 1875. Under executive orders the issue of leases for thirty years under Section I of the Settlement Rules has been discontinued in the plains of Cachar.

Two other tenures require notice. Bakshas are ^{Bakshas, etc.} grants of revenue-free land made by the Kachari Rajas to members of their own race. They are exempt from assessment so long as they are not alienated. In 1902-03, they covered an area of 1,227 acres. A special concession has also been made to a family of mirasdars in the Sonapur pargana, who were granted a remission of half their land revenue as a reward for good services performed on the occasion of the Lushai expedition of 1869. This concession extends to the generation subsequent to that of the original grantee, but the total area affected is little more than one square mile.

The result of the low rate assessed for waste and ^{Incidence of land revenue.} the comparatively low rate assessed on cultivation, is that the incidence of land revenue is much lighter in Cachar than in Assam Proper. In Cachar the incidence per acre of the fully assessed area in 1902-03 was Re. 1-1-4; in Assam Proper it ranged from Rs. 2-1-10 to Rs. 2-10-8. The incidence per cultivated acre in Cachar in that year was Rs. 1-13-1; in Assam Proper it ranged from Rs. 2-6-10 to Rs. 3-0-0. The incidence per head of population was Re. 1-1-4 in Cachar, while in Assam Proper it ranged from Re. 1-11-10 to Rs. 2-7-1.

At the time of Mr. Mills' visit to the district in 1853, land revenue was collected at three tahsils situated ^{Land Revenue collection.} at Silchar, Katigara, and Hailakandi. In 1859, Mr. Allen

reported that the revenue was collected with punctuality, and that recourse was seldom had to the distraint and sale of personal property. Land was not sold for arrears of revenue, but if an estate defaulted it could be transferred to any person who paid the arrears of the defaulter. This somewhat singular rule appears to have worked fairly well, and between 1853 and 1858 only 19 estates had changed hands in this manner. The three tahsils remained unchanged for many years, but owing to the extension of cultivation, and enhancements of the rates of revenue, the amount to be collected at the *sadr* tahsil had risen by 1901 to upwards of Rs. 2,85,000. Some inconvenience was experienced in collecting such a large sum at a single office, and in 1903 four *mauzas* were formed consisting of (1) Pargana Chatla Haor, (2) Pargana Banraj, (3) Parganas Rupairbally and Lakhipur, and (4) Parganas Bhuban Hill and Davidsonabad. The demand of the *sadr* tahsil was by this means reduced to Rs. 1,65,000. In 1905, the Katigara tahsil also was split up into three *mauzas*. Revenue is due in three instalments, one-fourth on August 1st, one-fourth on November 1st, and one-half on March 1st.

When a raiyat defaults, a notice of demand is served upon him.* If this proves insufficient, the moveable property, or, in the absence of a sufficient quantity of moveable property, the estate itself, can be attached and sold. In 1903-1904, notices of demand issued on account of 7 per cent. of the total land revenue demand, and

* The Deputy Commissioner has recently been authorised to dispense with this notice of demand, if he considers it desirable to do so, and to proceed at once to attachment.

property was attached on account of 4 per cent. The proportion of the land revenue on account of which property or land had actually to be sold was, however, only 0·1 per cent.

Silchar town was settled for a period of thirty years Town lands. with effect from April 1902. The highest rates assessed per acre on trade sites were Rs. 75, rising in the eleventh year to Rs. 105; and on residential land Rs. 86, rising to Rs. 48. On certain special trade sites frontage rates were assessed varying from Rs. 8-8 to As. 8 per cubit. Under the rules now in force, waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual letting value of the site. The lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner thinks fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. The rates assessed in Hailakandi are those imposed in ordinary first class villages.

Opium is not much in favour with the inhabitants Opium. of the Surma Valley, and in 1902-08 the total revenue raised from opium in the Cachar Plains only amounted to Rs. 85,000. This is an insignificant sum in comparison with the Rs. 5,12,000 raised in Lakhimpur, a district which has a smaller population. The hill tribes of North Cachar, and more especially the Mikirs, are, however, much addicted to the drug. The total opium revenue raised per head of population (excluding persons censused on the railway) in the hills in 1902-08 was Rs. 2-3-9 as compared with Re. 0-1-4 per head of population in the plains. Details as to the number of shops and

revenue raised from opium in each subdivision will be found in Table XV.

The drug is generally swallowed in the form of pills, or mixed with water and drunk. *Madak* is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. *Chandu* is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like *madak* in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed.

Country-
spirit. The
still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods and generally in what is known as the closed still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted an earthen jar. The wash is placed in the retort, and as it boils rises in the form of vapour into the earthen jar whence it passes down two tubes into two receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

Material
employed.

The material employed is either the flower of the *mohwa* tree (*bassia-latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, or molasses and rice. *Mohwa* is generally used by up-country distillers, and, as the foreigners, who form a large part of the liquor-drinking population, prefer the *mohwa* spirit, its use is spreading amongst the Sunris who some years ago generally distilled from

molasses. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed: *mohwa* 80 seers and water 60 seers; or *mohwa* 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Sustu*, the refuse wash which remains in the retort after the distillation, is sometimes used in place of water. *Muli*, a substance composed of leaves, roots, and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in large earthenware vessels, which, to economise space, are often sunk up to their necks in the floor of the shop. Large earthenware vessels are cleansed before they are filled with wash by heating them with hot ashes or ropes of straw which are allowed to smoulder for some hours inside; smaller vessels are usually washed with water. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still. The process of distillation takes about three hours.

A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour-and-three-quarters, three gallons in two-hours-and-a-quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 80 seers of *mohwa*, the first $8\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of *mohwa* Different grades of spirit.

Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 80 seers of *mohwa*, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distill the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

Number of
shops and
revenue.

	No. of shops.	Revenue. Rs.
1873-74	141	43,596
1879-80	72	27,317
1889-90	50	76,067
1899-1900	35	1,29,948

From the abstract in the margin it will be seen that a considerable expansion of the revenue under the head of country spirits has been accompanied by a great diminution in the facilities for obtaining liquor:—

For every four shops in 1873-74, there was only one in 1899-1900; yet like the Sibylline books, the aggregate value of the shops increased as their number was diminished. This was due to freer competition at the auction sales, which enabled Government to divert into the treasury a portion of the profits of the trade. Table XV shows the number of country-spirit shops in each subdivision, and the amount for which they are sold.

Reforms in
excise ad-
ministration.

Though few complaints have been received with regard to the administration of the liquor laws in Cachar, it cannot be denied that in the neighbourhood of some liquor shops, drunkenness and disorderly conduct are not uncommon. The attention of Government has been

more than once directed to the most effective measures for the mitigation of this evil. The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, but in a district like Cachar where communications in the rains are difficult it is not altogether easy to find anything to take its place. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing, as far as possible, the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still. The shops must be closed on market days and holidays at 4 P.M. in winter and 6 P.M. in summer. The maximum quantity of liquor which may be sold to a purchaser has also been reduced from six quart bottles at a time to three quart bottles in a day.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Ganja is fairly popular in the Surma Valley, and Cachar yields a larger revenue from this drug than any district in the Province except Sylhet. Full details with regard to the ganja revenue of each subdivision will be found in Table XV.

Laopani or rice-beer is the national drink of the unconverted tribes. It is also taken by some of the humbler Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country-spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on

a mat, and *muli* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are five seers of rice and three chattaks of *muli* to half a *kulsi* of water; and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Income Tax.

The receipts under the head of income tax in 1904 amounted to Rs. 28,879, about one-half of which was derived from the salaries paid to garden managers and their subordinates. Other sources of income yielded Rs. 10,730, which was paid by 182 assesses, the great majority of whom were engaged in commerce and trade. This class included 18 money-lenders, 29 contractors, 44 dealers in food-grains, and 11 dealers in piece-goods. Only 15 professional men were assessed to income tax,

14 of whom were pleaders. There has been a considerable expansion under this head of revenue in Cachar. The receipts in 1888 amounted to Rs. 25,800 and by 1899 had risen to Rs. 88,500. The decrease which occurred in 1904 was largely due to the effect of Act XI of 1908, which raised the minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum.

The receipts under the head of judicial stamps in 1908-04 amounted to Rs. 66,788. Cachar stood second in the list of districts, but the revenue obtained was less than a sixth of that which was realised in Sylhet. Rs. 29,089 were derived from non-judicial stamps, a figure which was largely exceeded by Sylhet and very slightly by Lakhimpur.

Public works are in charge of an Executive or Assistant Engineer who is usually assisted by two upper and three lower subordinates. The Public works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, circuit-houses, dak bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The most important lines of communication which are directly under the Department are (1) the road from Badarpur through Silchar to Jirighat on the Manipur frontier; and (2) the road from Silchar across the Chatla haor through Somairkona to Hailakandi. A little to the north of Hailakandi it divides into two branches, one going to Badarpur the other to Salchapra railway station.

It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the Department has to contend are the absence of an artizan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour. It is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Cachar is largely due.

General Administration.

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into three subdivisions. Silchar is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, who is allowed as his immediate assistants three subordinate magistrates and a sub-deputy collector. Hailakandi is entrusted to an assistant magistrate, who is almost invariably a European, and who is allowed a sub-deputy collector as his assistant. The North Cachar Hills are administered by a European Officer of Police who exercises judicial powers. The Deputy Commissioner is not only District Magistrate, but he is also District, though not Sessions, Judge. In addition to his purely magisterial and judicial functions, he is responsible for the harmonious and efficient working of the various departments of the administration which are described in the following pages.

Criminal and civil justice.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first-class magistrates to the Sessions Judge of Sylhet who is also the Sessions Judge of Cachar. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Judicature at Calcutta. In 1902, there were nine stipendiary and two honorary

magistrates in the Cachar Plains. The former decided 775 and the latter only two original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 3,125 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 987 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is not much serious crime and most of the offences were either theft or house trespass. The Deputy Commissioner is invested with the special powers mentioned in Sections 80 and 84 of the Criminal Procedure Code, and is authorised to impose sentences up to seven years' rigorous imprisonment.

The civil work of the district is not heavy. The Deputy Commissioner acts as the District Civil Judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision in the plains discharges the functions of a munsif. Appeals from the decisions of the munsifs are heard by the subordinate judge of Sylhet and Cachar, who holds his court periodically at Silchar for this purpose. In 1902, the District Civil Judge* heard 14 original cases and 25 appeals, while 2,080 original suits were disposed of by the munsifs. Less than one-sixth of these suits were contested, and a large proportion of them were simple money-suits.

Special rules are in force for the administration of justice in the North Cachar Hills. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred except on its criminal side in the case of European British subjects, and the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentence of death, transportation

North
Cachar.

* The appointment of the subordinate judge was sanctioned in 1903.

and imprisonment for fourteen years. Sentences of death, transportation, and imprisonment for seven years or upward require, however, the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner. No appeal lies as a matter of right from any sentence of the Deputy Commissioner of less than three years' imprisonment.

Registration.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the registrar of the district and there is a special sub-registrar at Silchar, and rural sub-registrars at Katigara and Hailakandi. The number of documents registered is considerable and in 1908 amounted to 7,899, a figure largely in excess of that returned from any district in the Assam Valley.

Volunteering.

A volunteer corps was first enrolled in Cachar in 1888, with a strength of 80 members, but was subsequently amalgamated with the Sylhet volunteers to form the Surma Valley Light Horse. This admirable corps had a strength in 1904 of 834 men, 156 of whom were residing in Cachar.

Police.

The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 1 inspector, 24 sub-inspectors, and 210 constables. Forty smooth-bore Martinis are allotted to Cachar, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and sub-divisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. The foundation of the police system is the village chaukidar. He is required to report

all serious crime to the officer in charge of the police station within which his village is situated, to arrest persons committing such crimes in his presence, to collect vital statistics, to observe the movements of bad characters, and generally to inform his official superiors of anything likely to affect the peace and good administration of the district. In addition to their regular duties in, connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrant cases. The district as a whole is fairly free from serious crime but murders are not uncommon, and, during the 20 years ending with 1899, seven cases of murder or culpable homicide were on the average reported every year.

In 1908, a dacoity of a very singular character was ^{Dacoity.} committed in the shop of a well-to-do trader on the Kalachara Tea Estate. All the arrangements for the crime were planned across the frontier in Afghanistan, and a gang of 27 men started for India with the deliberate intention of looting a shop in the Hailakandi valley, 2,000 miles away. Fortunately the trader was on friendly terms with another Pathan, who had been accustomed to make the shop his headquarters when he came on trading expeditions to Cachar, and this man gave information to the police. It was intended to arrest the dacoits in the very act, but they arrived earlier than was expected and succeeded in getting away with their booty. Twenty-four of the gang were, however, subsequently arrested, and were duly tried and convicted.

The chaukidar.

Under native rule an establishment of village servants, called *dakuals*, was maintained by the Raja of Cachar, and remunerated by assignments of land which were estimated to bring in about Rs. 5 per annum. When the district lapsed to the British in 1880, these grants of land were resumed, and a chaukidar was appointed to every 64 houses, each of which contributed one pice per mensem for his support. His sole duty was to report heinous offences at the police stations, and to submit from time to time reports on the state of affairs in his beat. He was not required to patrol at night, as fear of wild animals kept people at home after dark. As time went on, the pay of the chaukidar, which had never at any time been large, became more and more inadequate for his support, and he grew in consequence more and more indifferent to his duties. Matters were to some extent improved by the introduction of Regulation I of 1888, but this Regulation has not proved to be entirely suited to the conditions prevailing in Cachar. The chaukidar is left to make his own arrangement with the villagers for his pay, and he thus receives it neither punctually nor in full. Act VI (B.C.) of 1870 has been extended to the district, but has not yet been introduced, and the village police are still managed under Regulation I. Six hundred and sixty-one chaukidars were entertained in Cachar in 1903, at a total cost of Rs. 82,000.

Military police.

For many years a battalion of military police was stationed in Cachar, and prior to the occupation of the Lushai Hills, a large portion of the battalion was detailed on outpost duty. In 1888, there were three posts in the North Cachar Hills, two in the plains at their

feet, and six along the eastern and southern frontier stretching from Jirighat to Jhalnachara at the south of the Hailakandi valley. The gradual pacification of the hill tribes has rendered it possible to withdraw these small detachments, and proposals have been submitted to amalgamate the force with the Lakhimpur military police battalion and to reduce the strength to 149 officers and men. The battalion saw a good deal of active service and took part in the Lushai Hills Expedition of 1871-72, the Garo Hills Expedition of 1872, the Naga Hills Expedition of 1879-80, the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90, the Manipur Expedition of 1891, and the Lushai Expedition of 1892. The service is not unpopular and recruits are fairly easily obtained, the great majority being Gurkhas, and the remainder members of the aboriginal tribes such as Garos, Rabhas, Meches and Kacharis. The number of resignations is, however, high, as men when they first join find it difficult to live upon their pay. The guards for the treasury and jail at Silchar are furnished by the military police. The men are armed with Martini-Henry rifles mark IV, bayonets, and kukris.

There is a jail at Silchar with accommodation for 58 Jail. convicts and magistrate's lock-ups at Haflang and Hailakandi. The prisoners at Silchar are chiefly employed on gardening, oil-pressing, and rice-husking. Those who are sentenced to more than one year's imprisonment are transferred to the large jail at Sylhet.

Education is a plant of comparatively recent growth in Cachar. In the year 1856-57, there was not a single school in the district. In 1860-61, there was one unaided Education. Progress of education.

school, which was attended by only 18 pupils.* Matters began slowly to improve, and in 1865-66 seven schools† were in existence, but little progress was made till the reforms initiated by Sir George Campbell had had time to take effect. The following statement shows the progress made since 1874-75:—

YEAR.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	No. of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874—75	7	373	108	2,119	2,492	94	...	...
1880—81	7	446	99	2,565	3,011	104	11·63	0·51
1890—91	3	413	190	4,708	5,121	75	15·88	1·34
1900—01	4	654	248	7,188	7,842	58	20·27	1·15

High and
Middle
schools

High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently, English was taught in all the classes. The smaller boys no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools; in the lower classes and in other

* Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, p. 456.

† Dacca Blue Book, p. 365.

schools the vernacular is employed. There is a Government high school at Silchar, and an aided high school at Hailakandi. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same; with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course: (1) Bengali comprising literature, grammar, and composition; (2) History of India; (3) Geography; (4) Arithmetic; (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying; and (6) simple lessons on botany and agriculture. Middle schools are situated at Silchar, Barkhala, Katigara, and Narsingpur.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than six per cent. of the total number, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated, and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 8 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. Statistics for female education will be found in Table XXI.

Primary
Education.

As in other parts of India it has made comparatively little progress. The inspecting staff consists of two Deputy Inspectors and one Sub-Inspector. The headquarters of the Inspector of the Surma Valley are located at Silchar.

Medical.

The District is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Silchar. It contains seven dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He also acts as superintendent of the jail, controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea-gardens on which the death-rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

The conditions under which the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. The houses are buried in groves of fruit-trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation ; and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow

holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated, but the work of purification must be done by the villagers themselves.

Vital statistics are reported verbally by the village chaukidars to the police, but the returns are far from accurate. The average recorded birth and death-rates between 1891 and 1901, worked out on the mean population of the decade, were births 80 and deaths 81 per mille. It is obvious that these figures must be wrong, but there are not sufficient data available to admit of the framing of a normal birth and death-rate for the district.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death most often takes in the Cachar district, at any rate according to official returns. These returns are, however, so inaccurate, and so little reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency that the figures hardly repay examination. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with unusual severity. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death-rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. The people are careless about vaccination, and the proportion so protected in the quinquennium ending with 1902-03 was not half of the proportion in the Province as a whole. The mortality from small-pox is proportionately high. The native methods of midwifery leave much to

Vital
statistics.

Causes of
mortality.

Cholera
death-rate
per mille :—
1889 ... 6.9
1891 ... 6.1
1893 ... 6.9
1897 ... 6.3

be desired, and it is feared that the mortality in child-birth is extremely high.

Increase in
facilities for
obtaining
medical aid.

	No. Dispensaries.	No. Patients treated.
1881	2	11,632
1891	4	31,638
1901	6	43,939

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and, in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the statement in the margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 4 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 870 to 1,274 :—

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Silchar and Hailakandi. The first dispensary was opened in the district, at Silchar, in 1864. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are worms, cutaneous disorders, malarial fevers, diseases of the eye, dysentery and diarrhoea, and rheumatic affections. Further information with regard to the dispensaries in the district will be found in Table XXIV.

Survey.

A professional revenue survey of the district was made at the time when Cachar was still a district of Bengal and the maps were published in 1870. They are on the scale of one inch to the mile, and show the sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1881, corrected in 1890, and is at present (1905) under revision. An area of 1,084 square miles which included the more densely populated portions of the district was cadastrally surveyed in the seasons of 1898-94 to 1895-96. The maps are on the

scale of sixteen inches to the mile, and, in addition to the topographical features, show the boundaries of each field. The results obtained from the cadastral survey have been utilised in the revision of the one-inch map of the district.



APPENDIX.

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LIST OF TEA GARDENS.

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.							
1	Abongchara	Messrs. Davidson, Charles & Ferguson.	Doake, Barkhala	12	996	Included in Subong.	259
2	Ailatal	North-Western Cachar Tea Co.	Katigara	26	Included in Karkuri.	211	201
3	Ainachura	Mr. Stephen George Sale and others.	Silchar	19	662	Included in Matichara.	
4	Alipur	Scotchnr Tea Co.	Lakhipur	10	1,039	Included in Pollarband.	
5	Allenpur	Anglo-American Direct Trading Co., Ltd.	Silchar	17	2,534	Included in Barjalinga.	
6	Alyne	Messrs. A. & R. Spicer	Lakhipur	20	1,742	530	532
7	Arkatipur	Arkatipur Tea Co.	Silchar	6	1,185	(a) 800	(a) 469
8	Badlichara	Indragram Tea Co.	Lakhipur	14	Included in Kumbhirgram.		292

9	Bagh 'o' Bahr	...	Irangmara Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	20	206	Included in Irangmara.	271
10	Baglaghat	...	Chinkuri Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	6	Included in	Chinkuri.	37
11	Bahadurpur	...	Jirighat Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	27	Included in Jirighat.	78	72
12	Baikunthapur	...	Dr. R. B. Davidson and others	...	Katigara	...	19	1,351	Included in Kalain.	
13	Balachara	...	Chora Tea Co.	...	Barkhala	...	18	1,818	528	713
14	Baladian	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	24	1,989	495	410
15	Baradudpatli	...	Dudpatli Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	3	12,091	Included in Hatichara.	(b)
16	Barjalinga	...	Anglo-American Direct Trading Co., Ltd.	Tea	Do.	...	17	1,968	716	816
17	Barkhala	...	Dr. A. J. M. MacLaghlin	...	Barkhala	...	11	815	280	169
18	Barsaigon	...	East India Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	12	681	350	308
19	Barthol	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	21	1,493	868	(d)
20	Bhorakhai	...	Bhorakhai Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	8	2,868	1,000	(e)
21	Bikrampur	...	Messrs. Smeal & Co.	...	Katigara	...	17	1,634	677	(f)
22	Binnakandi	...	Eastern Cachar Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	17	3,166	199	442
23	Boaljur	...	Babu R. C. Gupta	...	Silchar	...	3	79	40	9
24	Bowalia	...	Eastern Cachar Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	20	1,307	117	178

a) Includes figures for Chapannahal. (d) " " " Jaipur. (e) Includes figures for Allampur. (f) " " " Eliachara. (g) " " " Kalibari.

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens—continued.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
25	Bundu ...	Tatapuri Tea Co.	... Lakhipur	21 Miles.	2,227	509	456
26	Chalitakandi ...	Dudpatli Tea Co.	... Silchar	3	120	Included in Hatichara.	
27	Chandighat ...	Rangamati Tea Co.	... Do.	12	2,396	530	354
28	Chappannahal ...	Arkatipur Tea Co.	... Do.	6	519	Included in Arkatipur.	
29	Chengjur ...	Messrs. Barlow & Co.	... Lakhipur	18	890	(h) 499	(h) 554
30	Chinkuri ...	Chinkuri Tea Co.	... Silchar	6	(i) 1,300	(i') 460	225
31	Chota Dudpatli ...	Dudpatli Tea Co.	... Do.	2	768	495	828
32	Chungdowa ...	Chungdowa Tea Co.	... Do.	14	1,959	481	291
33	Craigpark ...	Craigpark Tea Co.]	... Katigara	25	1,240	633	417

34	Dalchava	...	Dalchava Tea Co.	...	Barkhala	...	13	2,069	556	522
35	Dalu	...	Dalu Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	10	3,483	1,300	1,639
36	Dalugram	...	Messrs. Grindlay & Co.	...	Do.	...	12	2,004	546	531
37	Darankhal	...	Cachar Duars Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	11	Included in Silkuri. Do.	578	674
38	Dargarkona	...	Ditto	...	Do.	...	12	689	(j) 366	677 470
39	Delkhosh	...	Mr. J. H. M. Stevenson	...	Lakhipur	...	17	1,659	1,300	1,069
40	Derby	...	Derby Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	14	1,830	544	969
41	Dewan	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	18	Included in Barchol. 1,081	487	633
42	Dhayerband	...	British India Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	18	1,342	Included in Chengjur.	...
43	Didarkhosh	...	Messrs. Barlow & Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	18	363	362	376
44	Digabar	...	North-Western Cachar Tea Co.	...	Katigara	...	21	Included in Karkuri. 2,387	Included in Chinkuri. 248	220 211
45	Doyapur	...	Mr. R. S. Upton and others	...	Silchar	...	9	488	Included in Binnakandi. 1,043	307
46	Elgin	...	Chinkuri Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	6	3,476	Included in Bhorkhai.	307
47	Eliachara	...	Eastern Cachar Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	18	...	...	...
48	Guabari	...	Messrs. A. & R. Spicer	...	Silchar	...	15	...	...	...
49	Gumra	...	Western Cachar Tea Co.	...	Katigara	...	25	...	...	...
50	Gungur	...	Bhorkhai Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	7	...	...	...

(h) Includes figure for Didarkhosh.
(i) " " Baglaghat and Elgin.

(j) Includes figure for Baglaghat.
(j) " " Monkosh.

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens—continued.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Miles.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1908.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
51	Hatichara ...	Dudpatli Tea Co. ...	Silchar ...	10	5,008	1,037	(k) 1,406	
52	Hatikuri ...	Eastern Cachar Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	18	475	235	285	
53	Helara ...	Mr. T. G. Stoker and others ...	Katigara ...	20	Included in Badarpur, (in Hailakandi subdivision.)	450	190	
54	Heranchara ...	Chera Tea Co. ...	Barkhala ...	11	696		460	
55	Indraghar ...	East India Tea Co. ...	Silchar ...	6	605	126	65	
56	Indragram ...	Indragram Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	17	1,292	Included in Kamdhigram. (l)	317	
57	Irangmara ...	Irangmara Tea Co. ...	Silchar ...	15	827	560	359	
58	Jaipur ...	Tarapur Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	22	2,080	Included in Barthol.		
59	Jalalpur ...	Western Cachar Tea Co. ...	Katigara ...	27	1,788	806	679	

60	Jatinga Valley	...	Jatinga Valley Tea Co.	...	Barkhala	...	15	990 (m)	518	647
61	Jirighat	...	Jirighat Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	24	1,036	218	334
62	Kalain	...	Dr. R. B. Davidson and others	...	Katigara	...	20	1,808	1,560 (n)	1,551
63	Kalainohara	...	Lubha Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	26	1,172	589	428
64	Kalibari	...	Messrs. Smeal & Co.	...	Do.	...	16	1,010	Included in Bikrampur.	
65	Kalinagar	...	Kalinagar Khoril Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	7	527	Included in Khoril.	
66	Karkuri	...	North-Western Cachar Tea Co.	...	Katigara	...	21	1,980 (o)	274	491
67	Kasipur	...	Kasipur Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	54	1,464	661	933
68	Katal	...	Imperial Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	8	1,757	1,198 (p)	1,008
69	Khoril	...	Kalinagar Khoril Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	8	1,033	485 (q)	729
70	Konapara	...	Dr. R. B. Davidson and others	...	Katigara	...	21	699	Included in Kalain.	
71	Kumbhir	...	Jatinga Valley Tea Co.	...	Silchar	...	15	2,404	839	1,001
72	Kumbhirgram	...	Indragram Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	15	1,504 (r)	1,270 (s)	565
73	Laboc	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	16	1,877	772	917
74	Lakhipur	...	Telka Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	14	Included in Naraindhar.		251

(k) Includes figures for Baradupatli and Chalitakandi.

(m) " " Bahadurpur.

(o) " " Aitatal and Digabar.

(q) " " Kalinagar.

(l) Includes figures for Bagh 'o' Babar.

(n) " " Baikunthapur, Konapara and Mesenta.

(p) " " Merua.

(r) " " Badlichara.

(s) Includes figures for Badlichara and Indragram.

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens—continued.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				Miles.			
75	Lallang ...	Tarapur Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	18	1,604	675	571
76	Larvingh ...	Jatinga Valley Tea Co. ...	Silchar ...	9	1,876	677	683
77	Lytlechura ...	Tarapur Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	20	932	600	548
78	Madura ...	Babu Dina Nath Datta ...	Silchar ...	7	377	195	137
79	Majargram ...	Majargram Tea Co. ...	Do. ...	11	1,363	529	674
80	Mandha ...	Eastern Cachar Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur ...	17	1,088	305	294
81	Manikthal ...	The East India Association, Ltd. ...	Sonai ...	25	1,649	533	594
82	Mashimpur ...	Kalinagar Khoril Tea Co. ...	Silchar ...	5	512	400	201
83	Masichura ...	Mr. Stephen George Sale and others. ...	Do. ...	20	1,797	700	786
84	Masichura ...	Imperial Tea Co. ...	Do. ...	7	2,637	Included in Katal.	

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens—continued.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour forces on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
				Miles.			
101	Rukni ...	Messrs. Butler & Macdonald ...	Sonai	20	Not known.	Not known.	371
102	Rupairbali ...	Babu B. C. Gupta ...	Lakhipur	12	731	165	141
103	St. Catherine ...	The East India Association, Ltd.	Sonai	20	904	Included in Maniarkhal.	
104	Salchapra ...	Diptamala Dhar ...	Silchar	10	760	Not known.	
105	Sootpur ...	Sootpur Tea Co. ...	Lakhipur	13	1,480	474	399
106	Shahapur ...	India Tea Co. of Cachar Ltd. ...	Silchar	21	1,052	Included in Rosekandi.	
107	Shiberband ...	Messrs. A. & R. Spicer ...	Do.	12	140	Included in Pathimara.	
108	Silkuri ...	Cachar Duars Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Do.	9	(a') 9,417	466	634
109	Srikona ...	Babu Golak Chandra Das and others.	Do.	7	857	150	66
110	Subong ...	Dr. Davidson and others	Barkhala	13	1,924	(b') 740	749

MI:

111	Tarapur}	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Lakhipur	...	13	1,125	849	885
112	Telka	...	Telka Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	17	1,385	Included in Naraindhar. 910	486
113	Thailu	...	Tarapur Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	19	1,844		828
114	Thaligram	...	Messrs. A. & R. Spioer	...	Silchar	...	13	53	Included in Pathimara.	
115	Tikalpur	...	Amalgamated Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	15	1,698	600	306
116	Urnarband	...	British India Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	10	2,581	695	783
117*	West Jalinga	...	Jalinga Tea Co.	...	Do.	...	16	1,805	564	506

HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.

1	Ainakhal	...	Bengal United Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Hailakandi	...	7	(a) 6,553	(a) 1,822	(a) 1,752
2	Apin...	...	Phoenix Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Katichohara	...	16	2,305 (b)	250 (b)	356
3	Badarpur	...	Mr. T. G. Stoker and others	...	Hailakandi	...	16	1,042	615	206
4	Bandukmara	...	Phoenix Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	8	2,817 (c)	560 (c)	600 (c)
5	Barunohara	...	Mr. T. M. Gibbons & Miss Gibbons.	...	Katichohara	...	28	11,198	439	597
6	Barnibrais	...	Central Cachar Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Hailakandi	...	10	2,625	600	508
7	Chandipur	...	Chandipur Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	8	8,645	758	893

(a') Includes figures for Daramthal and Dargarkona.

* The Tea Report for 1908 shows 147 gardens. The gardens which have not been separately surveyed are included in one or the other of the 117 gardens shown in this list.

(a) Includes figures for Lakhipur.

(b) Includes figures for Helara in Silchar subdivision.

(c) Includes figures for Jhalnuchara, Kutichohara and Nagachohara.

STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens—concluded.

Serial No.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head-quarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under tea (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
8	Dhalai ...	Mr. T. M. Gibbons & Miss Gibbons.	Katichara ...	26	1,938	330	318
9	Jhalnachara...	Mr. T. M. Gibbons	Do.	80	Included in Barunchara.		
10	Jhaptriband Gogla-chara.	South Oachar Tea Co., Ltd. & Mr. H. E. Crawford.	Hailakandi ...	9	2,122	459	597
11	Kalsachara ...	Kalsachara Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	8	2,719	450	505
12	Kanchanpur ...	Kanchanpur Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	6	Not known.		523
13	Katichara ...	Katichara Tea Co., Ltd.	Katichara ...	18	2,810	400	470
14	Kalya ...	Messrs. Harby, Macneill & Co., & D. McWha.	Hailakandi ...	9	2,323	684	761
15	Katichara ...	Katichara Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	6	738	80	69
16	Katichara ...	Mr. T. M. Gibbons	Katichara ...	25	Included in Barunchara.		

17	Lekhnagar ...	Bengal United Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Hailakandi ...	7		Included in Ainakhal.	
18	Lalachara ...	Second Mutual Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Katlichara ...	15	3,250	832	1,040
19	Lalamukh or Hasiura	New Mutual Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Hailakandi ...	12	3,863	833	879
20	Manachara ...	Bengal United Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Do. ...	5†	1,895	235	303
21	Manipur ...	Messrs. T. B. Atkins, J. Alwin & W. Stiefelhagen.	Katlichara ...	23	1,340	310	249
22	Mohanpur ...	Central Cachar Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Hailakandi ...	9	2,770	350	305
23	Nagaohara ...	Mr. T. M. Gibbons ...	Katlichara ...	24	Included in Barunchara.		
24	Rupachara ...	Messrs. D. H. McFarlane & Co., Ltd.	Do. ...	17	849	500	636
25	Saraspur ...	Central Cachar Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Hailakandi ...	2	2,808	441	528
26*	Vernerpur ...	Cachar Native Joint Stock Co., Ltd.	Katlichara ...	16	3,437	675	761

* The Tea Report for 1908 shows 33 gardens. The difference is due to [the revision of the tea garden register and gardens which have no separate coolie lines having been included in the main garden.]

STATEMENT B.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Post or Telegraph Office.	Thana or Outpost in which situated.
Badarpur*	Karimganj Thana (in Sylhet)
Banskandi*	Silohar Thana
Barkhala*	Barkhala Outpost
Dalu*	Ditto
Dalagram	Silchar Thana
Damohara	Barkhala Outpost
Derby*	Silchar Thana
Dewan*	Lakhipur Thana
Dhayarband*	Silohar Thana
Hafang*	Naga mauza
Hailakandi*	Hailakandi Thana
Hatikuri	Lakhipur Thana
Jirighat	Ditto
Kalachara	Hailakandi Thana
Kalain*	Katigara Thana
Kaliberi bazar	Hailakandi Thana
Katlichara*	Katlichara Outpost
Kukichara*	Ditto
Kumbhir*	Silohar Thana
Lakhipur*	Lakhipur Thana
Lala*	Hailakandi Thana
Maibang	Nakti mauza
Manachara*	Hailakandi Thana
Palanghat	Sonai Outpost
Rosekandi*	Silohar Thana
Salohapra	Ditto
Silohar	Ditto
Silkuri*	Ditto
Sonaimukh	Sonai Outpost
Udharband*	Silohar Thana

* The names marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices. There is also a departmental telegraph office at Silchar.

STATEMENT C.

List of villages having three or more permanent shops.

Name of tahsil.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
NORTH CACHAR ...	Hafang	22
KATIGARA	Baraitali	5
	Bhairabpur	4
	Buribail	5
	Burunga	3
	Ganirgram	8
	Govindapur	10
	Khelma	4
	Lakhipur	4
	Mahadebpur	5
	Natwanpur	4
	Shib Narayanpur	4
SILCHAR	Badarpur	5
	Banskandi bazar	13
	Barkhala bazar	43
	Bara Rampur bazar	10
	Claverhouse	3
	Damohara bazar	12
	Dayapur	7
	Dudpatli	7
	Harinchara	3
	Kumarpara	13
	Loharband	3
	Masimpur	4
	Nij Banskandi	9
	Rangpur	6
	Ranir bazar	30
	Salchapra bazar	4
	Silchar town	473
	Sonabarighat bazar	3
	Sonaimukh bazar	52
	Tarapur	6
	Tekalpur bazar	5
	Udharband bazar	63
	Ujangram	5
	Ujannagar	3
HAILAKANDI	Hailakandi	120

STATEMENT D.

List of Markets.

Tahsil.	Place at which market is held.					Days of week when held.
HAFLANG ...	Hafang ...	...	...	...	...	Friday
	Harangajao ...	...	...	...	...	Tuesday
	Mahur ...	...	...	...	...	Friday
KATIGARA ...	Behara ...	...	...	...	...	Monday and Friday
	Bhadari ...	...	...	...	...	Saturday and Wednesday
	Digabar ...	...	...	...	...	Tuesday
	Gumra ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Haritikar ...	...	...	...	...	Saturday and Wednesday
	Jalalpur ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday and Thursday
	Kalain ...	...	...	...	...	Saturday and Wednesday
	Kalainchara ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday
	Kalibari ...	...	...	...	...	Saturday and Wednesday
	Karkuri ...	...	...	...	...	Tuesday.
	Katigara ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday and Sunday
	Kanakhai ...	...	...	...	...	Friday
	Natwanpur ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday
	Pechachara ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday and Thursday
SILCHAR ...	Siyaltekk ...	...	...	...	...	Tuesday and Friday
	Trikpakai ...	...	...	...	...	Tuesday
	Alni ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday
	Banskandi ...	...	...	...	...	Monday and Friday
	Bara Jalinga ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Bara Manda ...	...	...	...	...	Monday
	Barkhala ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday and Thursday
	Binnakandi ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Changduar ...	...	...	...	...	Thursday
	Derby ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Dhayarband ...	...	...	...	...	Thursday
	Dhalai bazar ...	...	...	...	...	Monday and Thursday
	Didarkhosh ...	...	...	...	...	Friday
	Jainagar ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday and Saturday
	Jaipur or Rajarbazar ...	...	...	...	...	Saturday and Tuesday
	Jirighat ...	...	...	...	...	Monday
	Kabarikona ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Katal ...	...	...	...	...	Do.
	Lakhipur ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday and Thursday
	Maniarkhal ...	...	...	...	...	Thursday
	Palaijunji ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday
	Panibhara ...	...	...	...	...	Wednesday
	Rani bazar ...	...	...	...	...	Monday and Thursday
	Rukni garden ...	...	...	...	...	Sunday

STATEMENT D.
List of Markets—concluded.

Tahsil.	Place at which market is held.	Days of week when held.
SILCHAR— <i>concl'd.</i>	Sahapur	Sunday
	Saint Catherine	Monday
	Salchapra	Wednesday and Saturday
	Silchar town—	
	Khas bazar	Daily
	Ukil bazar	Sunday
	Sildubi	Wednesday
	Silkuri	Sunday
	Singarband	Saturday and Tuesday
	Sonai	Do. do.
	South Mohanpur	Monday
	Srikona II	Do.
	Tariniganj or Paylapal	Monday and Friday
	Telka	Tuesday
	Udharband	Monday and Friday
HAILAKANDI...	Ainakhal	Sunday.
	Baburbazar (Kalinagar)	Saturday and Wednesday
	Bandukmara garden	Sunday
	Chandipur garden	Do.
	Chupalghat (Bhatirkupa)... ..	Monday and Thursday
	Dhalai bazar	Wednesday
	" garden	Friday
	Hailakandi town	Saturday and Wednesday
	Hasiura garden	Sunday and Thursday
	Janaki bazar (North Kanchanpur)	Saturday and Wednesday
	Joykrishnapur	Monday and Friday
	Kalachara (Sudarsanpur)	Sunday and Thursday
	Kalibari bazar (Algapur)	Monday and Thursday
	Kaya garden	Sunday
	Kuchila garden	Tuesday and Friday
	Kukichara garden	Friday
	Lala bazar	Saturday and Tuesday
	Lalachara garden	Sunday and Thursday
	Lotakandi "	Thursday
	Manachara bazar	Do.
	Matijuri (Banadaha)	Tuesday and Friday
	Mohanpur bazar	Saturday
	" garden	Sunday
	Pakhichara garden	Do.
	Ralakandi (Itarkandi)	Friday
	Robertabad grant	Sunday
	Rupachara garden	Do.
	Saraspur garden	Friday
	Vernerpur garden	Saturday

TABLE I.
Average maximum and minimum temperatures registered at Silchar.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Year.
Maximum temperature ...	77°·8	80°·7	86°·0	88°·5	88°·7	89°·4	90°·2	89°·5	89°·8	88°·7	84°·8	79°·7	86°·1
Minimum " ...	52°·3	55°·6	63°·2	69°·2	72°·5	76°·2	77°·2	76°·8	76°·4	72°·3	69°·6	55°·0	67°·5

TABLE II.

Rainfall.

[The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn in bracket below the name of each station.]

Months.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.			
	Hadang (4 years).	Bikrampur (9 years).	Silchar (43 years).	Hailakandi (29 years).
January	0·28	0·28	0·64	0·70
February	1·40	2·34	2·32	1·75
March	5·69	9·95	7·93	8·26
April	9·23	19·25	13·56	12·96
May	7·60	22·83	15·72	15·79
June	15·42	27·85	20·39	19·69
July	11·60	27·81	19·98	15·61
August	10·17	24·82	18·69	16·49
September	12·21	20·95	13·95	12·12
October	8·42	9·21	6·40	5·90
November	0·55	1·69	1·31	1·10
December	0·01	0·27	0·54	0·60
TOTAL OF YEAR ...	77·48	16·675	121·48	110·97

TABLE III.

Distribution of population by thanas.

Thana.	Popu- lation in 1901.	Popu- lation in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
Silchar ...	162,094	1,40,461	+ 21,633	706.09	229	63,947
Lakhipur* ...	83,821	73,041	+ 10,780	266.91	314	27,408
Katigara ...	55,969	54,171	+ 1,798	674.76	82	10,365
Hailakandi ...	112,897	99,869	+ 13,028	414.00	272	27,843
North Cachar	40,812	18,941	+ 21,871	1,706.00	24	20,324†
TOTAL DISTRICT	455,593	386,483	+ 69,110	† 3,769	121	

* Udharband pargana, which in 1891 contained 7,124 persons, has since been transferred to the *Saár* Thana. The figures for 1891 for these two Thanass have been corrected accordingly.

† Railway population.

‡ The area of the district was furnished by the Survey Department and does not tally with the sum total of the areas of thanas, as the latter figures were obtained from the District Officer. The boundaries of the district were changed in 1904, and the present area is 3,565 square miles.

TABLE IV.
General statistics of population by subdivision.

	SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.		HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.		NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Population—									
1901	157,984	143,900	58,822	54,075	27,355	13,457	455,598	244,161	211,432
1891	142,472	125,201	51,901	47,968	9,806	9,635	386,493	203,679	182,804
1881	211,821		81,917		20,120		313,858	166,936	146,922
1872	75,767	63,589	34,606	31,085	15,000*	15,000*	235,027	125,373	109,654
Variation—									
1891—1901	+15,512	+18,699	+6,921	+6,107	+18,049	+3,822	+69,110	+40,482	+28,628
1881—1891	+55,852		+17,952		—1,179		+72,625	+36,743	+35,882
1872—1881	+72,465		+16,246		—9,880		+78,831	+41,563	+37,268

* Estimated figures.

TABLE IV.
General statistics of population by subdivision—concluded.

	SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.		HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.		NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1901.									
Religion—									
Total Hindus ...	111,813	103,366	33,556	31,229	16,297	7,611	302,872	161,666	141,206
Shahaj Bhaianas ...	529	384	820	728	3	...	2,464	1,352	1,112
Other Vaishnavas ...	30,983	27,762	11,168	10,030	907	148	80,998	43,058	37,940
Saktists ...	34,990	31,231	9,940	9,200	6,842	4,898	97,161	51,772	45,389
Sivaits ...	8,568	7,207	1,195	948	195	29	18,142	9,958	8,184
Muhammadans ...	43,150	37,123	24,905	22,515	5,544	260	132,502	72,599	59,903
Animistic ...	3,474	3,981	313	311	5,378	5,561	18,918	9,035	9,883
Total Christians ...	494	407	40	16	59	24	1,040	593	447
Anglican Commun.	213	123	23	11	30	8	408	266	142
Minor Denominations	200	233	6	2	9	11	461	215	246
Other religions ...	53	18	8	4	177	1	261	238	23

Civil condition—									
Unmarried ...	82,894	56,179	31,547	20,025	11,381	5,793	206,719	126,722	80,997
Married ...	67,915	64,401	24,859	24,680	14,864	5,676	202,405	107,688	94,767
Widowed ...	7,175	24,320	2,416	9,860	1,210	1,988	46,469	10,801	35,668
Literacy—									
Literate in Bengali	12,409	540	4,305	143	768	86	18,701	17,982	719
" " English	1,342	80	299	14	341	18	2,094	1,982	112
Illiterate ...	143,396	143,278	53,680	53,915	25,279	13,394	433,892	222,305	210,587
Languages spoken—									
Bengali ...	89,080	79,192	45,438	41,411	3,866	208	259,145	138,384	120,811
Dimas ...	3,742	3,678	164	161	5,279	4,437	17,461	9,185	8,276
Manipuri ...	19,594	18,947	3,196	3,025	197	16	44,975	23,987	21,988
Eastern Hindi and Hindostani.	36,808	33,865	9,367	8,782	6,417	2,450	97,689	52,592	45,027

TABLE V.

Birth place, race, caste and occupation by subdivision.

	SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.		HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.		NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL.			
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
<i>Birth place.</i>										
Born in district ...	102,448	100,250	43,295	42,041	10,596	10,223	308,843	156,329	152,514	
" Other parts of Province.	13,579	5,473	4,586	1,857	3,140	353	28,988	21,305	7,883	
" Chota Nagpur	10,983	11,225	1,803	2,210	853	413	27,487	13,639	13,848	
" Other parts of Bengal.	16,042	13,908	3,684	3,841	2,358	543	40,376	22,064	18,292	
" United Provinces.	7,418	5,864	4,483	2,600	3,691	1,070	25,116	15,582	9,534	
" Central Provinces.	5,074	5,333	675	1,175	622	395	13,324	6,871	6,953	
" Nepal.	357	110	16	5	1,367	130	1,985	1,740	245	
" Everywhere.	2,083	1,687	280	346	4,748	330	9,474	7,111	2,863	

<i>Race and Caste.</i>	5,043	5,437	1,430	1,441	106	43	13,489	6,578	6,911
Bauri ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Bhuiya ...	4,324	4,236	598	533	153	53	9,896	5,074	4,823
Brahman ...	1,771	1,072	436	311	594	95	4,279	2,801	1,478
Chamar ...	3,698	3,608	1,578	1,840	793	401	11,918	6,069	5,849
Dom Patni ...	14,475	13,941	6,185	6,175	241	22	41,039	20,901	20,138
Eurasian ...	16	19	...	...	4	1	40	20	20
European (a) ...	169	50	35	14	39	10	317	243	74
Goala ...	2,508	2,206	621	558	408	96	6,390	3,530	2,880
Jugi ...	3,720	3,391	2,035	1,902	105	10	11,163	5,860	5,303
Kachari ...	2,083	2,019	50	...	4,414	4,294	12,860	6,547	6,313
Kayastha ...	3,285	1,706	448	367	415	38	6,159	4,148	2,011
Khattriya ...	2,133	2,175	3,375	2,935	196	10	10,824	5,704	5,120
Kuki ...	1,715	1,712	175	177	2,857	2,639	9,265	4,747	4,518
Mali ...	1,258	948	1,011	938	142	9	4,306	2,411	1,895
Manipuri ...	14,657	13,964	4	...	28	5	28,658	14,689	13,969
Munda ...	3,676	3,433	174	207	221	72	7,783	4,071	3,712
Musahar ...	2,633	2,905	768	730	131	55	7,217	3,527	3,690

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE V.
Birth place, race, caste and occupation by subdivision—concluded.

	SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.		HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.		NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males. Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9 10
Naga ...	1,081	1,433	...	...	1,921	2,230	6,805	2,953 3,653
Namesudra ...	4,127	3,491	2,978	2,863	70	4	13,533	7,175 6,358
Santal ...	4,307	4,167	713	775	105	17	10,084	5,125 4,959
Occupation.								
Workers ...	141,618 Males.*		66,950 Females*		22,689	6,736	237,943	164,267 73,686
Dependents ...	206,218 Both Sexes.*				11,437, Both Sexes.		217,650	... ...
Total supported—								
Landholders ...	58,301	51,424	26,196	24,268	...	...	1,60,189	84,497 75,692
Tenants ...	80,173	23,275	14,727	12,104	...	...	80,279	44,900 35,379
Farm servants ...	1,714	3,351	443	436	10	6	5,959	2,166 3,793
Jhum cultivators ...	40	258	286	278	9,768	10,155	20,785	10,094 10,691
Garden labourers ...	44,397	46,595	11,372	12,304	23	4	114,595	55,692 58,903
Road, Canal and Railway labourers.	319	237	170	70	11,882	2,340	14,518	11,871 2,647

* Figure for Cachar Plains.

TABLE VI.

Vital Statistics.

YEAR.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM—			
				Cholera.	Small- pox.	Fever.	Bowel com- plaints.
1901	414,781	35.38	29.96	2.84	0.20	14.13	2.68
1902	414,781	35.58	28.85	2.09	2.71	10.57	2.59
1903	414,781	34.89	27.93	1.34	1.06	11.20	2.43
1904	414,781	36.54	22.23	0.50	0.07	9.22	2.28
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE VII.

Crop Statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
TOTAL DISTRICT.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area	288,783	320,190	330,208	317,172								
Rice ...	167,877	208,230	213,727	208,690								
Mustard ...	7,725	10,078	11,942	11,746								
Sugarcane...	2,864	4,972	5,240	5,289								
Pulse ...	6,000	5,861	5,540	4,207								
All other crops ...	104,317	93,049	94,459	87,208								

xxx

PARTICULARS.	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
TEA.												
<i>Sitchar subdivision.</i>												
Number of gardens ...	150	148	147	138								
Area in acres ...	152,210	173,039	187,904	203,783								
Area under plant in acres.	48,601	48,402	47,923	47,972								
Output in lbs. ...	23,341,954	20,703,670	23,460,380	24,204,866								
Labour force ...	60,658	57,996	52,691	49,935								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	1,921	...	1,118	1,537								

* The immigration statistics are compiled for the period from 1st July to 30th June since 1902-03.

TABLE VII.
Crop Statistics—concluded.

PARTICULARS.	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
TMA.												
Hatlekeadi sub-division.												
Number of gardens ...	35	34	33	31								
Area in acres ...	70,908	67,988	68,363	69,690								
Area under plant in acres.	11,945	11,971	12,113	11,353								
Outturn in lbs.	4,745,610	4,713,837	9,032,207	7,445,598								
Labour force ...	15,988	15,610	13,429	13,596								
Labourers including de- pendants imported during the year.	591	...	123	274								

TABLE
Reserved

Name of Reserve.	Area in sq. miles.	RECEIPTS.				
		1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Upper Jiri	24	102	2,087	2,836	1,092	
Lower „	14	63	949	667	542	
Barak	69	317	3,238	5,516	405	
Sonai	8	6	107	29	6	
Inner Line	497	27,149	26,817	17,767	21,676	
Katakhal	80	924	1,156	2,865	1,718	
Langting Mupa	80	...	...	...	...	
Barail	35	...	...	206	592	

VIII.

Forests.

[illegible]

TABLE

Outturn of timber and fuel

DETAILS.				1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
Reserved Forests—							
Area	...	...	sq. miles	772	807	807	807
Outturn (Government and purchasers only.)							
Timber	...	...	cft.	198,525	285,294	234,525	217,973
Fuel	...	...	„	40,157	33,442	4,093	2,260
Unclassed State Forests—							
Area	...	...	sq. miles	741	732	731	711
Outturn (Government and purchasers only.)							
Timber	...	...	cft.	206,190	222,636	379,814	466,644
Fuel	...	...	„	74,879	73,362	63,347	72,583
Rubber	...	...	Rs.	10,883	486	175	284
Forest receipts	...	...	„	1,06,695	92,288	1,06,230	1,34,128
„ expenditure	...	...	„	48,808	44,641	40,469	51,529
Surplus or deficit	...	...	„	+ 57,887	+ 47,647	+ 65,761	+ 82,599

TABLE X.
Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee at selected marts.

	SILCHAR.			HAILAKANDI.		
	Rice, common.	Salt.	Matikalsi.	Rice common.	Salt.	Matikalsi.
1890 { 2nd week of February ...	15½	8½	17½	...	...	...
1890 { " " of August ...	20	8½	21½	...	...	...
1890 { " " of February ...	14½	9½	15	18	8	16
1890 { " " of August ...	10	9½	16	13	8	18
1900 { " " of February ...	16	9½	10½	22	8	20
1900 { " " of August ...	14	9½	13	18	8	12
1901 { " " of February ...	9½	10	12	9	8	16
1901 { " " of August ...	11	9½	12	8	8	12
1902 { " " of February ...	16	10	13	16	8	12
1902 { " " of August ...	12	10	13	14	8	13
1903 { " " of February ...	14	10½	12	18	8	16
1903 { " " of August ...	13	12	13	15	10½	13

1904 {	"	"	of February	...	19†	12†	13	24	10	16
"	"	"	of August	...	17†	12†	15†	23	10†	18†
1905 {	"	"	of February	...	19†	12†	18†	25	10†	15
"	"	"	of August	...						
1906 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1907 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1908 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1909 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1910 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1911 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						
1912 {	"	"	of February	...						
"	"	"	of August	...						

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159.	20	7	29	13	16	14
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	2	2	4	2	1	1
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 309.	6	2	9	4	3	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	14	6	17	7	23	4
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	4	1	2	...	6	1
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	5	2	6	4	8	5
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398.	2	2	1	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 283, 423, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	19	1	16	...	8	2
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460.	95	7	98	4	105	8
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344.	4	1	9	1	4	1

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION—concl'd.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	2	...	...	...
(xii) Theft. Sections 379--382	165	46	119	32	110	35
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414.	1	1	3	2	4	3
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	20	7	17	6	15	6
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	9	1	7	2	3	1
TOTAL ...	366	86	339	77	306	83
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159.	18	11	5	4	5	3
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	2	1	5	3	...	...
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 306.	...	...	1	1	3	...
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	2	1	9	4	3	1

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION—contd.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	1	...	1	...	1	...
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	1	...	5	3	...	...
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398.	1	...	3	...	2	2
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	6	1	6	1	4	3
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460.	36	4	31	2	40	4
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344.	...	...	3	1	3	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382.	41	17	33	13	29	13
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414.	...	...	...	...	2	2
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	5	1	3	2	5	3
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	2	...	...	...	2	1
TOTAL ...	115	36	105	34	99	32

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	3	2	1	...	1	...
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, etc.	6	2	2	2	...	...
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 309.	...	...	1	1	...	...
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	5	3	4	1	1	1
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	3	2	1	1	...	...
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	...	...	...	...	1	...
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460.	17	6	8	3	...	...
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344.	3	...	1	...	...	...

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION—concl'd.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	1	1	...	...	...	...
(xii) Theft. Sections 379—382.	20	12	20	7	6	...
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414.	1	1	1	1	1	...
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447, and 448.	1	...	2	...	1	...
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	5	...	1	1	...	...
TOTAL ...	65	29	43	17	11	1
TOTAL DISTRICT.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159.	41	20	35	17	22	17
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, etc.	10	5	11	7	1	1
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 306.	6	2	11	6	6	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	21	10	30	12	27	6
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	5	1	3	...	7	1
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	9	4	12	8	8	5

[illegible]

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal and Civil

Heads of Crime.	1902		1903		1904	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
TOTAL DISTRICT—concl'd.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398.	3	2	4	...	2	
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	25	2	22	1	13	6
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460.	148	17	137	9	145	12
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344.	7	1	13	2	7	1
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	1	1	2	...	...	...
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382.	226	75	172	52	145	48
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414.	2	2	4	3	7	5
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	26	8	22	8	21	9
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	16	1	8	3	5	2
TOTAL ...	546	151	486	128	416	115
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and moveables ...	1,572		1,586			
Title or other suits	312		298			
Rent suits	116		148			
TOTAL ...	2,000		2,032			

[illegible]

TABLE

Finance.—

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary).	8,38,423	4,00,120	4,77,885	4,79,802	4,79,285
Land revenue (miscellaneous).	13,062	18,919	24,361	20,705	29,098
Provincial rates ...	28,959	29,030	46,953	44,469	42,139
Judicial stamps ...	41,835	65,459	65,091	70,177	66,738
Non-judicial stamps	23,801	29,513	24,717	28,214	29,089
Opium	41,626	84,581	77,050	80,389	80,872
Country spirits ...	98,268	1,28,343	1,15,463	1,03,048	1,16,375
Ganja	55,886	70,515	65,669	68,544	71,899
Other heads of excise	2,249	8,220	5,593	4,165	4,630
Assessed taxes ...	25,890	31,074	33,822	36,009	28,879
No. of assesses per thousand.	2	2	2	2	1
Forests	37,950	1,06,695	92,288	1,06,230	1,34,123
Registration*... ..	4,912	6,807	6,800	8,056	7,747
TOTAL ...	7,10,851	9,79,276	10,35,192	10,49,808	10,90,879

* Registration statistics are given for the calendar year

XII.

Receipts.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

from 1903, which corresponds with 1902-03 in this statement.

TABLE

Miscellaneous land revenue

PARTICULARS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.				
House tax	1,296	1,246	1,190	1,080
Fisheries	6,558	7,581	5,141	10,975
TOTAL REVENUE ...	11,256	10,402	7,498	16,812
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.				
Elephants	...	...	...	4,800
House tax	156	110	80	78
Fisheries	...	...	...	1,306
TOTAL REVENUE ...	889	159	1,417	6,214
NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.				
Elephants	...	7,100	5,250	...
House tax	6,774	6,700	6,540	6,572
TOTAL REVENUE ...	6,774	13,800	11,790	6,572
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Elephants	...	7,100	5,250	4,800
House tax	8,226	8,056	7,810	7,780
Fisheries	6,558	7,581	5,141	12,281
Other heads	4,185	1,624	2,504	4,287
TOTAL REVENUE ...	18,919	24,361	20,705	29,098

XIII.

by subdivisions.

[illegible]

TABLE

Land tenures by

PARTICULARS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	219,300	216,004	247,682	245,123
Held on ordinary tenures	317,509	215,144	246,927	244,384
Held revenue-free (Lakhiraj)	1,791	860	755	789
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	222,719	224,061	199,799	199,446
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants	95,365	95,365	92,322	93,703
Area settled under other special rules ...	20,623	20,623	20,420	20,611
Area settled on 30 years' lease	2,734	2,734	4,601	3,192
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease	103,997	105,329	82,456	81,940
Total land settled for other purposes ...	1,922	1,915	1,272	1,255
Total settled area of subdivision ..	443,941	441,970	448,753	445,824
Total unsettled area of subdivision* ...	611,419	613,390	606,607	451,609
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	89,371	90,579	94,552	100,457
Held on ordinary tenure	88,899	90,107	94,080	99,985
Held revenue-free (Lakhiraj)	472	472	472	472
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	63,746	63,746	63,950	65,363
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants	50,429	50,429	50,429	50,620
Area settled under other special rules ...	5,303	5,303	5,303	5,303

* Owing to a change in the boundaries of the

XIV.

subdivisions.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

district the area was changed in 1908-04.

TABLE
Land tenures by

PARTICULARS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION—concl'd.				
Area settled on 30 years' lease ...	437	437	437	1,238
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	7,577	7,577	7,781	8,202
Total land settled for other purposes ...	211	211	211	210
Total settled area of subdivision ...	153,328	154,536	158,713	166,030
Total unsettled area of subdivision*	111,632	110,424	106,247	161,163
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	308,671	306,593	342,234	345,580
Held on ordinary tenures ...	306,408	305,251	341,007	344,869
Held revenue-free (Lakhiraj) ...	2,263	1,332	1,227	1,211
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	286,465	287,797	363,749	364,809
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants	145,794	145,794	142,751	144,323
Area settled under other special rules ...	25,926	25,926	25,723	25,914
Area settled on 30 years' lease ...	3,171	3,171	5,038	4,430
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	111,574	112,906	90,237	90,142
Total land settled for other purposes ...	2,133	2,126	1,483	1,465
Total settled area of district (Plains) ...	597,269	596,506	607,466	611,854
Total unsettled area of district (Plains)*...	723,051	723,814	712,854	612,772

* Owing to a change in the boundaries of the

XIV.

subdivisions—concluded.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

district the area was changed in 1903-04.

TABLE
Excise by

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.				
Number of opium shops ...	18	14	10	14
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	7,777	9,741	7,569	6,835
	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	21 21 0	14 32 0	14 30 0	21 7 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	24,539	16,872	18,668	24,139
Number of ganja shops ...	27	27	24	27
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	21,585	19,609	19,222	16,693
	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	118 21 0	92 4 0	104 14 0	118 31 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	33,145	27,926	29,801	31,520
Number of country spirit shops...	21	21	21	21
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	38,364	35,079	73,273	30,467
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty ... Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	2,497	2,192	2,818	2,440
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.				
Number of opium shops ...	6	7	6	5
Amount paid for licenses... Rs.	1,953	1,971	1,615	1,620
	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	5 14 0	4 32 0	5 24 0	4 35 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	6,099	5,472	6,869	5,557
Number of ganja shops ...	14	13	12	13

XV.

subdivisions.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	
m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	
m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	

TABLE
Excise by

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION —concl'd.				
Amount paid for licenses... Rs.	5,174	5,300	5,087	6,185
	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	27 39 8	28 2 8	41 14 8	34 24 8
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	6,886	7,024	10,434	8,799
Number of country spirit shops ...	11	11	11	11
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	19,634	21,874	20,250	21,138
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty ... Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	61	41	22	361
NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.				
Number of opium shops ...	6	7	7	6
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	12,293	11,445	12,210	13,480
	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.	m. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	28 0 0	27 27 0	31 6 0	25 26 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	31,920	31,549	33,658	29,241
Number of ganja shops ...	2	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses* Rs.	3,725	5,810	4,000	5,702
Number of country spirit shops ...	3	1	3	3
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	20,345	9,010	9,525	14,770

* There is no ganja golah in the North Cachar subdivision.

XV.

subdivisions—continued.

[illegible]

Ganja is issued from Silohar and the duty levied there.

TABLE
Excise by

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION —concl'd.				
Number of distilleries	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	5,662	3,360	1,325	1,829
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Number of opium shops	25	28	33	25
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	22,028	23,157	21,394	21,935
Opium issued	m. s. ch. 54 35 0	m. s. ch. 47 11 0	m. s. ch. 51 30 0	m. s. ch. 51 28 0
Duty on opium sold Rs.	62,558	53,898	58,995	58,937
Number of ganja shops	43	42	38	42
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	30,484	30,719	23,309	31,580
Amount of ganja issued	m. s. ch. 146 20 8	m. s. ch. 120 6 8	m. s. ch. 145 28 8	m. s. ch. 153 15 8
Duty on ganja sold Rs.	40,031	34,950	40,235	40,319
Number of country spirit shops ...	35	33	35	35
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	1,28,343	1,15,463	1,03,048	1,16,375
Number of distilleries	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses... .. Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	8,220	5,593	4,165	4,630

XV.

ubdivisions—concluded.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	
<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	
<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	<i>m. s. ch.</i>	

TABLE XVI.
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE OF LOCAL BOARDS.
Sitchar Local Board.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.		EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91	1900-01			1890-91	1900-01
	Rs.	Rs.			Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates	20,956	19,864	Post Office	...	763	903
Police	8,883	6,496	Administration	...	149	149
Tolls on ferries	27,405	18,684	Education	...	8,868	12,705
Contributions	2,733	12,980	Medical	...	1,020	5,040
Debt	...	4,861	Civil works	...	25,255	40,116
Miscellaneous	1,030	849	Debt	...	...	4,369
			Contributions	...	...	364
			Miscellaneous	...	2,047	1,539
Total ...	56,008	68,174	Total	...	37,601	66,074

Hailakandi Local Board.

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Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91	1900-01		1890-91	1900-01
	Ra.	Ra.		Ra.	Ra.
Provincial rates ...	...	...	...	...	...
Police ...	8,003	9,181	Post Office	...	368
Tolls on ferries ...	...	1,952	Administration	...	63
Contributions ...	4,879	3,761	Education	4,406	5,262
Debt ...	10,267	14,774	Medical	443	880
Miscellaneous ...	...	2,154	Civil works	14,569	23,746
	546	1,822	Debt	...	2,154
			Miscellaneous	687	381
Total ...	28,197	38,644	Total ...	20,116	37,804

TABLE XVII.

MUNICIPAL.

Silchar Municipality.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91	1900-01		1890-91	1900-01
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance	1,321	4,284	Administration	887	1,007
Tax on houses and lands	3,363	5,665	Conservancy	3,703	6,407
Pounds	1,193	530	Public works	2,848	5,310
Fees from markets	3,366	3,046	Public instruction	402	646
Grants from Provincial and Local Funds.	1,841	2,953	Drainage	798	998
Tolls on roads and ferries	3,664	3,745	Other heads	5,708	6,880
Other sources	1,104	3,507	Closing balance	1,576	2,537
Total	15,973	28,780	Total	15,873	28,780

TABLE XVIII.
Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.	1881	1891	1901
CIVIL POLICE.			
<i>Supervising Staff.</i>			
District and Assistant Superintendents	2	2	2
Inspectors	2	1	1
<i>Subordinate Staff.</i>			
Sub-Inspectors	4	6	10
Head Constables	15	18	15
Constables	86	112	147
Rural Police	307	464	658
Union and Municipal Police	13	...	...
..			
MILITARY POLICE.			
Officers	...	...	40
Men	...	...	322
Total Expenditure Rs. ...	42,524	55,424	178,086

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during 1901, the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year. The information regarding Military Police for 1891 is not available.

TABLE XIX.
Police Stations and Outposts in 1904.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.	SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
	Sub-Inspector.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
Silchar—				
Barkhala—O.P.	1	.....	5	6
Katigara—P.S.	2	.....	11	13
Lekhipur—P.S.	2	.....	11	13
Silchar—P.S.	3	.....	18	21
Sonai—O.P.	2	.....	7	9
Hallakandi—				
Hallakandi—P.S.	3	.....	13	16
Katlichara—O.P.	1	.....	5	6

TABLE XX.
STATISTICS OF JAILS.

Silchar Jail.

	1881	1891	1901
Average daily population ... { Male ...	90.68	78.17	64.83
Female ...	11.07	1.81	0.34
Rate of jail mortality per 1000	10	63	46
Expenditure on Jail maintenance ... Rs.	9,153	5,548	6,375
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners) Rs.	44	44	45
Profits on jail manufacture	5,014	531	578
Earnings per prisoner†	60	8	11

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE

Educa

	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>High Schools.</i>				
Number	1	1	1	2
Number of boys reading in High School Classes.	77	96	65	74
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	41	40	81	103
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes	194	193	163	261
<i>Middle English Schools.</i>				
Number	3	4	4	8
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	74	63	73	43
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes	268	281	318	271
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools.</i>				
Number	...	1	1	1
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	...	7	8	7
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes	...	26	65	55
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools.</i>				
Number	12	11	11	11
Number of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes.	116	118	126	126
Number of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes.	360	293	288	278

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TABLE
Education—

	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04
Lower Primary Schools.				
Number	227	232	235	230
Number of boys reading in three upper classes.	} (a) 6,248	} (a) 6,543	2,443	4,347
Number of boys reading in lower classes			4,317	2,194
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of girls' schools	9	8	6	4
Number of girls reading (whether in girls' or boys' schools) in—				
High Schools	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools ..	...	...	...	...
Middle Vernacular Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Upper Primary Schools ...	64	68	68	60
Lower Primary Schools ...	400	427	404	238

(a) Separate figures

XXI.

concluded.

1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12

not available.

TABLE XXII.
Educational Finance.

PARTICULARS.	Number of institu- tions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM—					Amount per head of scholar.
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sour- ces.	Total.	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. A. P.
Training and Special Schools	...	1,367	452	1,275	...	3,094	55 4 0
Secondary Boys' Schools—							
Upper (High)	...	853	...	5,003	...	5,856	19 9 4
Lower (Middle)	...	776	1,056	1,780	454	4,066	13 4 7
Primary Boys' School—							
Upper	...	...	1,568	729	521	2,818	6 4 5
Lower	...	...	12,844	2,985	243	16,072	2 11 8
Girls' Schools	...	...	502	...	240	742	4 10 2
TOTAL	255	2,996	16,422	11,772	1,453	33,643	4 9 0

TABLE XXIII.

Medical.

PARTICULARS.	SILCHAR SUBDIVISION.			HAILAKANDI SUBDIVISION.			NORTH CACHAR SUBDIVISION.			TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Number of dispensaries	1	2	4	1	1	1	...	1	1	2	4	6
Daily average number of in-door patients.	38.42	44.33	41.32	4.93	3.25	5.11	...	0.91	...	43.35	43.49	43.43
Daily average number of out-door patients.	25.12	63.47	103.87	40.29	30.89	40.96	...	5.52	16.25	65.41	99.88	165.58
Cases treated ...	5,949	19,845	30,995	5,683	10,123	9,567	...	1,867	3,377	11,632	31,838	43,939
Operations performed...	276	523	998	94	77	257	...	15	19	370	620	1,274
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	...	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Total income ...	4,965	8,164	10,603	1,075	1,613	1,772	...	275	437	6,040	10,052	12,481
Income from Government.	279	2,299	2,615	171	162	187	...	275	437	450	2,736	3,289
Income from Local and Municipal Funds.	3,936	990	5,514	716	290	1,080	...	...	...	4,652	1,280	6,594
Subscriptions ...	750	514	592	188	57	255	...	...	...	938	571	847
Total expenditure ...	4,965	8,164	10,222	1,075	1,613	1,772	...	275	437	6,040	10,052	12,481
Expenditure on establishment.	1,126	2,785	3,812	516	540	570	...	120	156	1,642	3,445	4,538
	(a)											
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	9.45	20.61	24.90
Cost per case ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	Rs. A. P. 0 2 10½	Rs. A. P. 0 3 5	

(a) Figures for 1881-82.

TABLE XXIV.
Dispensaries.

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1900		1901		1902		1903		1904		1905	
	Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.	
	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.
Silchar	...	5,874	12,484	5,913	14,523	5,455	13,909	6,051	13,258	6,220	13,539	Rs.
Hailakandi	...	1,877	9,801	1,772	9,587	1,383	11,607	1,176	12,121	1,321	12,230	Rs.
Katigara	...	1,199	6,996	1,074	7,062	504	7,189	905	7,356	3,102	7,801	Rs.
Hafang	...	417	3,818	487	3,877	638	2,638	260	2,435	195	2,161	Rs.
Lakhipur	...	1,999	6,043	1,731	5,801	1,604	7,043	1,355	8,240	1,295	8,334	Rs.
Barhala	...	2,770	2,853	1,505	3,580	2,043	3,176	880	4,235	1,148	4,623	Rs.
Fenchachara	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,578	1,005	9,272	Rs.

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1906		1907		1908		1909		1910		1911		1912	
	Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.		Cases treated.	
	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.	Total cost.	Rs.
Silchar	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hailakandi	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Katigara	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Hafang	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Lakhipur	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Barhala	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Fenchachara	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

* Not available.

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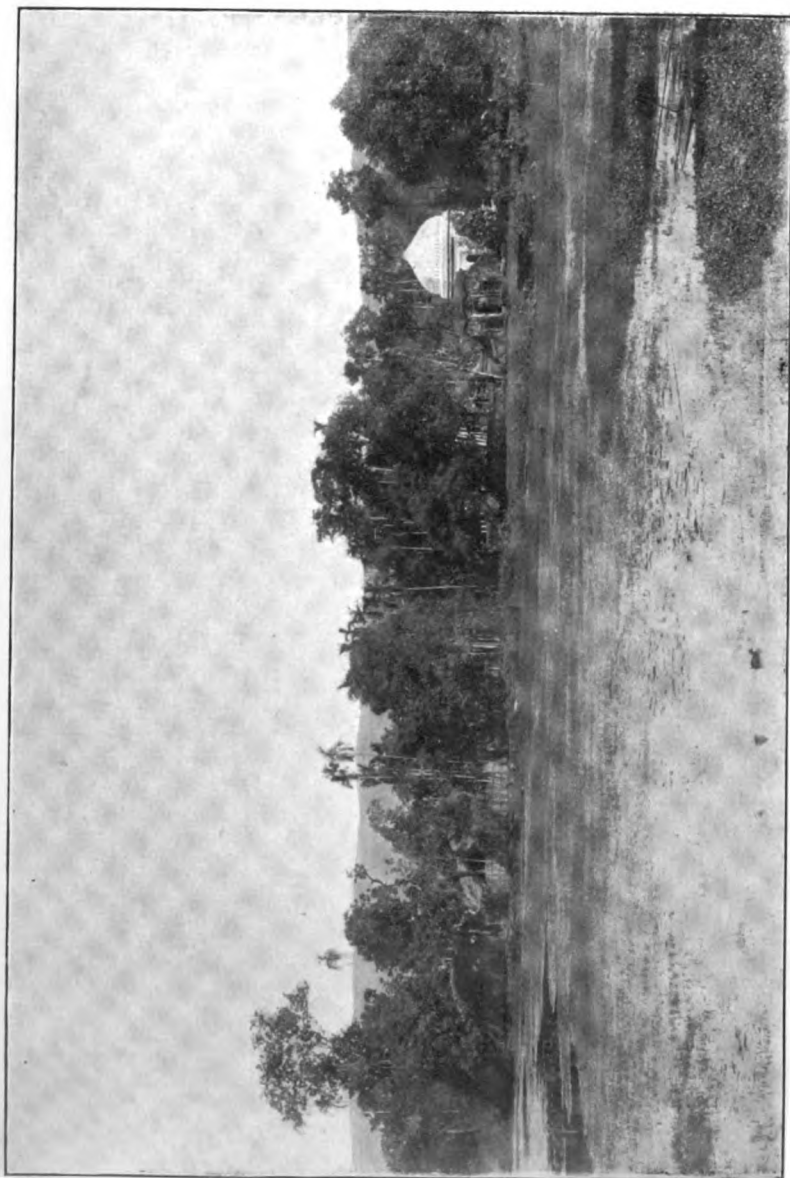
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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

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SYLHET

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B. C. ALLEN, C.S.



Calcutta:

**PRINTED AT THE CALEDONIAN STEAM PRINTING WORKS,
3, WELLESLEY PLACE.**

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.

THE Gazetteer of Sylhet is nothing more than a general description of the district as a whole, and does not, as Gazetteers generally do, include a directory. There are, however, hardly any places in the district which are worthy of the name of town, and the little villages in which the people live do not call for a separate and detailed description. Places which are centres of local trade or of some industry have been specified by name, but to attempt to describe each of these villages would merely have resulted in the most tedious iteration. It should be added that the Gazetteer was compiled at a time when Assam was still a separate Province, and that when the Province is mentioned it is to Assam and not to Eastern Bengal and Assam that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

B. C. ALLEN.

SHILLONG, *October*, 1905.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and Boundaries—General Aspects—Mountain System—River System—
Swamps and Marshes—Geology—Climate—Earthquakes—Fauna.

The district of Sylhet (vernacular *Srihatta*), which occupies the lower valley of the Barak or Surma river, lies between 23°59' and 25°13' N. and 90°56' and 93°36' E. and covers an area of 5,435 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, on the east by Cachar, on the south by the State of Hill Tippera, and on the west by the districts of Tippera and Mymensingh.

Boundaries and dimensions. The district is a broad and level valley bounded on either side by hills of considerable height. On the north there are none of the low outer ranges that generally break the descent of a mountain system to the plain ; the change is sharp and abrupt, and west of Therriaghat, the cliffs are like a Titanic sunk fence in some monstrous park, which drop 4,000 feet and more from the plateau above. Farther east the level falls, and the Jaintia Hills sink in an easy slope towards the plain. The mountains on the south belong to a different system, and run north and south instead of east and west ; they do not rise like an unbroken wall along the southern frontier, but thrust out eight spurs into the plain itself. On the eastern boundary one of these spurs stretches right up to the Barak, and the Surma Valley at this point is only some ten miles in breadth. The district is only a few feet above the level of the sea, is

intersected with numerous tortuous and sluggish rivers, and is dotted over with huge saucer-like depressions called *haors*, which are filled with water in the rainy season. Between June and September, a great part of Sunamganj, the north-westerly subdivision, goes under water. The banks of the rivers are the highest portions of the country and are lined with villages, but the rest of the subdivision is converted into a huge swamp covered with reeds and jungle grass. Here and there, there are islets of high ground which are always crowded with houses, but for a traveller passing through this country in the rainy season, it is difficult to realize that it supports a population of about 300 to the square mile. Further east the level rises, and the scenery is of a more normal type. Broad plains, covered with waving rice, are bounded on every side by what seems at a little distance to be dense and sombre forest. It is, however, only the jungle of bamboos, plantains, jack fruit, and mango trees, which completely conceal the houses of the cultivators; and a closer inspection shows that it is not one continuous belt of villages, but that the bamboo clumps are situated at varying intervals, and that it is only an optical delusion that makes them appear like an unbroken line. The scenery is monotonous, but in the summer time the wide expanse of green is restful to the eye, and near the hills the effect is very picturesque.

Round Sylhet town there are numerous low hills, covered with the freshest and most luxuriant turf; the bamboos which surround the villages are some of the most graceful of their kind, and the plain is bounded on the north by the bluest of blue hills. From Chhatak

*

the view is of a different character. Rivers and swamps extend on every side, but here and there are islets and ridges of high land, with lawns that slope to the water, dotted with shady trees that recall some garden washed by the waters of the Thames. To the south there are waving fields of rice, bounded with a long line of bamboos and palms ; on the north the hills rise like a mighty wall from the waste of waters and jungle at their feet. Their summits are often clothed in clouds, through which the rivers hurry to hurl themselves over precipices one or two thousand feet in height. The cliffs are here as sheer as though carved out by some cyclopean mason, and even in that humid atmosphere no tree or plant is able to obtain a foothold on the smooth unbroken surface. Below these mighty precipices are steep slopes clothed in dense tropical forest. In the central portion of the district, the scenery is more tame, but towards the south, the hills again appear, though the ranges that are situated within the boundaries of Sylhet are too low to add much to the beauty of the scene. At the eastern end, near Karimganj, dense groves of the graceful areca palm make a pleasant foreground to the blue mountains of North Cachar, and the low isolated hills, that project some two or three hundred feet above the alluvium, serve to break the level of the plain. The rivers with which the valley is intersected are dotted over with native craft, and, even in the winter time, the country on every side looks fresh and green.

In the central and southern portion of Sylhet there is little waste or uncultivated land, except in the hills, which in their
Jungle land.

natural state are covered with low scrub or bamboo jungle, and in the *haors*, which are lakes in the rainy season, and magnificent grazing grounds in the cold weather. In the north the Khasi and Jaintia Hills rise from swamps which recall the jungle that fringes the Brahmaputra, and there are wide stretches covered with reeds and elephant grass from ten to fifteen feet in height.

Roughly speaking, the district falls into the following divisions. To the north, there is the wall of hills along whose base the district boundary runs. At the foot of the hills there is a fosse or moat, a belt of country five or six miles wide, in places even more, which goes under water in the rains and is covered with high reed jungle, patches of which are cleared in the cold weather and sown with winter crops. This belt of flooded land is also found along the western border of Sylhet, though here, especially towards the south, it carries little jungle. In the south, the level gradually rises towards the Tippera Hills, and the spurs projecting northwards from this system afford a considerable area of high land suited to the growth of tea. The central portion of the district is a flat plain gradually rising in level towards the east, intersected with numerous sluggish rivers and water courses, and sinking here and there into great saucer-like depressions, which are being gradually filled by deposits of silt.

The Khasi and Jaintia Hills lie outside the borders of the district, and it is only at Chhatak, Barakia, and Panduah, and in the north-east corner of the Jaintia Parganas, between Jaintiapur

Mountain system.

and Mulagul, that the outlying ranges are represented by a few small hills that rise above the surface of the alluvium. A little to the north of Sylhet town there are numerous isolated hillocks, called *tilas*, from one to two hundred feet in height, and at Chiknagul, on the road between Sylhet and Jaintiapur, these hills take the form of ranges which cover an area of several square miles. A few more *tilas* are to be found between the Surma and the Kusiya, near Golapganj and Madhuganj, but the rest of the country north of the Kusiya and the Barak is a broad unbroken plain.

South of that river eight ranges of hills project from the Tippera system into the valley. On the extreme east is the Chhatachura range which starts from the Chhatachura peak, on the boundary of the Tippera and Lushai Hills, and forms the dividing line between the districts of Sylhet and Cachar. Chhatachura itself is 2,087 feet above the level of the sea, but the range gradually declines in height. The middle section, which bears the name of Saraspur, is only 1000 feet above sea level, while near the Barak at Badarpur it is only three or four hundred feet in height. On the western side of the Singla, or as it is more generally called, the Chargola valley, the Dohaliya or Pratapgarh hills stretch in a compact chain as far north as the Son *bil*. Beyond this point they break up into isolated *tilas*, which are continued right up to the Barak at Badarpur. The general height of the range is from four to five hundred feet, and the slopes are easy and gentle. The Pratapgarh range is separated from the Pathariya hills by the valley of the Langai. The Pathariyas are a tract of hilly country, from six to seven

miles in breadth, which runs almost due north as far as Latu. Several of the higher peaks are from six to seven hundred feet in height, but the level rises gradually from the plain, and the slopes are very easy. The Harargaz, or Langla hills might almost be classed as a continuation of the Pathariya range to the south-west. Near the frontier they attain an elevation in one peak of over 1,100 feet, but the general height of the outlying spurs is only about one-third of this.

The Bhanugach or Rajkandi hills are a small low range south of the Shamsbernagar railway station. Here they are stopped by the valley of the Manu, but reappear again on the further side, and under the name of the Ita hills, stretch nearly up to Fenchuganj. In height they range from 150 to 300 feet. The Balisira range lies between the Dholai on the east, the Manu on the north, and the road from Maulavi Bazar to Srimangal on the west. They rise gently from the plain to heights varying from 150 to 300 feet, and are rather a tract of elevated land than hills, in the sense in which that term is usually employed. The Satgaon and Raghunandan hills are two low ranges to the west. The railway runs along the foot of the Raghunandans from Itakhola to Shahji Bazar, and crosses the Satgaon hills near the station of that name. They contain no peaks of any height, and in general appearance resemble the Balisira range. In their natural state all of these hills are covered with tree forest, bamboo jungle, or low scrub. The soil and level were, however, found to be suitable for tea, and large areas have been cleared on the lower slopes and cultivated with that plant.

The principal river of the district is the Barak, which rises on the southern slopes of the Naga-Manipur watershed, flows through Manipur, Cachar, and Sylhet, and finally empties itself into the old bed of the Brahmaputra near Bhoirab Bazar, after a course, measured along its northern branch, of 560 miles. From Badarpur to a little beyond Haritika, a distance of some seven miles, it forms the boundary between Sylhet and Cachar. At this point it divides into two branches, the more northerly of which is called the Surma, and as far as Jelalpur flows in a north-westerly direction towards the Jaintia Hills, and continues to form the boundary between Cachar and Sylhet. Here it enters the latter district, and after receiving the waters of the Lobha, flows a south-westerly course to Golapganj. From this point the stream again takes a northerly direction past Sylhet town to Chhatak. From Chhatak to Sunamganj its course lies near the base of the Khasi Hills, but at the latter town it again turns sharply to the south. A little to the north of Dirai it turns westward and enters Mymensingh, and flows partly through that district, partly along the Sylhet frontier. Near Ajmiriganj it is joined by the Kalni, and at Madna by the Barak, and the combined stream which is here known as the Dhaleswari, finally falls into the old bed of the Brahmaputra.

The lower channel is known at first as the Kusiara, but after its confluence with the Manu it again divides into two branches. The northern arm is called the Bibiyana, and afterwards the Kalni, and rejoins the Surma on the borders of the district near Ajmiriganj. The

southern stream resumes the name of the original river, the Barak, and, after passing Nabiganj and Habiganj, falls into the Surma a little to the west of that place. The Surma in its course through the northern portion of the district receives the following rivers which bring to it the drainage of the hills—the Lobha, the Hari, which under the name of the Kusiya, joins it a little to the east of Sylhet, the Goyain Gong, or as it is called in the lower part of its course the Chengar khal, the Bogapani, and the Jadukata. The rainfall in this portion of the district is extremely heavy, and is only exceeded by the phenomenal precipitation on the southern face of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the whole of which drains down into the valley. The plain is less than 50 feet above sea level, and the natural consequence is that the rivers are unable to carry off the enormous volume of water precipitated on their catchment areas. The whole of the district north of the Surma is a network of streams and channels which connect the principal rivers with one another, and during the rainy season the lower parts of the country go under water.

The principal tributaries of the Kusiara are the Singla, the Langai, the Manu, the Gopla, and the Khowai. The Singla rises in the Lushai Hills, and flows between the Chhatachura and Pratapgarh ranges northwards to the Son *bil*. On emerging from this *bil* it is known as the Kachua, and falls into the Kusiara a little to the east of Karimganj town. For the first eight miles of its course through the district, it flows through jungle land which is very sparsely peopled; but from

**The Southern
Rivers—The Singla.**

that point to its junction with the Kusiara its banks are fringed with villages and tea gardens.

The Langai also rises in the mountainous country beyond the southern frontier, and
The Langai. . flows a northerly course between the Pratapgarh and Pathariya hills to within a few miles of Karimganj town. Here it turns to the south-west and finally disappears in the Hakaluki *haor*, but during the rainy season it is connected with the Kusiara by a channel known as the Natia khal.

The Manu rises in Hill Tippera, and flows a
The Manu. tortuous north-westerly course between the Rajkandi and Ita hills, and along the northern face of the Balisira range past Maulavi Bazar, till it falls into the Kusiara a little to the east of Bahadurpur. Its principal tributary is the Dholai, which collects the drainage from the Balisira and Rajkandi hills. The Gopla drains the low country between the Balisira and Satgaon hills, and the Khowai rises in Hill Tippera and falls into the Barak at Habiganj. Throughout the whole of its course its banks are lined with villages, and some of them, like Muchikandi and Laskarpur, are of considerable importance.

The country between the Surma and the Kusiara or Barak exhibits much the same phenomena as are to be found in the northern section of the district. The rainfall is extremely heavy, the level falls but slightly towards the west, and the line of drainage is not clear and well defined. There is a whole network

of smaller streams, many of which flow from north to south, and rise from or disappear in *haors*, or swamps. South of the Barak, the level falls more steeply from the hills and the general trend of the drainage is towards that river.

The rivers possess the characteristics usually to be found in a flat alluvial country.

General characteristics of rivers. The current is sluggish, the course is tortuous, and the bottom muddy.

In the rains the waters are surcharged with matter washed from the surrounding hills, and in times of flood a large portion of this silt is deposited in the immediate neighbourhood of the stream. The result is that the banks of the rivers tend to become higher than the country at the back, and they are in consequence generally lined with villages. The extent to which these rivers are used for navigation is referred to in the section dealing with communications.

The two salient facts about the drainage system of Sylhet are the enormous quantity of rain water which is precipitated upon the district itself, or drains into it from the surrounding hills, and the absence of a sufficiently steep gradient to carry this huge rainfall off. As a natural consequence water tends to collect in the rainy season in every hollow, and the larger depressions, which are known as *haors*, are a distinctive feature in the district scenery. From June to September they are considerable lakes, but when the rains end the water gradually drains off, and during the

Swamps and marshes.

dry season is only to be found in the lowest parts of the *haor*. The remainder is covered with reeds and grass and is sometimes sown with winter crops. The level of these swamps is being gradually raised by the silt that is every year poured into them, and the submerged area is being gradually reduced. Statement A appended to this chapter shows what an enormous number of these swamps there are, and how they are distributed over every portion of the district, while Statement B contains the names of the most important *haors*.

The plain is of alluvial origin and is composed of clay and sand in varying proportions.

Geology.

The low isolated hills, which here and there project above the level of the alluvium, are formed of layers of sand and gravel, which are often highly indurated with a ferruginous cement. The hills to the south are composed of upper tertiary rocks, in which sand stone largely predominates. Although Sylhet lime is well known in the Calcutta market, and though an enormous quantity is every year exported from the district, the only lime quarry within the boundaries of Sylhet is the one at Jaflong, and even this is not worked at the present day. Deposits of coal exist near Pathariya in the Langai valley, but no attempt has yet been made to work them.

The climate of Sylhet is warmer and not less humid than that of the Assam Valley, but
Rainfall and temperature. between the middle of November and the middle of February is fairly cool and pleasant. In

March the temperature begins to rise, but heavy rain in April and May prevents the development of the fierce hot weather that is such a trial to the residents in the plains of Upper India at this season of the year. Table I in the appendix shows the average monthly rainfall at certain selected stations in the district. November to February are the four dry months, the average rainfall at Sylhet during that period being only 3.24 inches. During April and May, when precipitation in Northern India is at a minimum, some 35 inches fall at the sadr station, and in the four succeeding months the rainfall is even heavier. There is a marked difference between the rainfall in the northern and southern portions of the district. In Sunamganj it is about 210 inches in the year, at Sylhet 157, and at Karimganj 160. At Maulavi Bazar, on the other hand, it is only 104 inches and at Habiganj ten inches less.

Storms generally come from the south-west, and are usually welcomed as they relieve the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, but are seldom sufficiently violent to do serious damage. Flood is the normal condition of the northern and western portions of the district during the rainy season, but the people have learned to adapt themselves to the peculiar conditions of the country, and do not as a rule suffer any special inconvenience. In the following chapter reference is made to the floods which are said to have been the cause of terrible desolation and misery at the end of the 18th century, but no such calamities have occurred of recent years. In 1853, there was a high flood, and the annual inundation was more pronounced than usual in

the west of the district in August 1893, September 1897, and July 1903, but no very serious damage was done.

Sylhet, like the rest of Assam, is a seismic area, and earthquakes are referred to in some of the earliest correspondence in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, though they do not seem to have been the cause of any serious damage. The shock of 1869 was an exception. This earthquake was felt over an area of 250,000 square miles, from Upper Burma to Patna and Hazaribagh, and is supposed to have originated in a fissure about 20 miles long, situated at a considerable depth below the surface on the northern border of the Jaintia Hills. In Sylhet, the steeple of the church was shattered, the walls of the Court-house and the Circuit bungalow were cracked, and in the eastern part of the district the banks of many of the rivers caved in. There was no loss of life, and the damage done was inconsiderable in comparison with the havoc wrought by the great earthquake of June 12th, 1897.

This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon in the south-east to Kangra in the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The first shock occurred at Sylhet about 4-50 P.M. and was not preceded

* Memoirs of Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIX, p. 52.

by any special atmospheric conditions, though the inhabitants of a village at the foot of the hills north of Sunamganj stated that, for some days previously, they had heard continual explosions, which seemed to be taking place in the north-east, *i.e.*, in the direction of Shillong. Nearly all the masonry buildings in Sylhet town were levelled with the ground. A new cutchery that was in course of construction at Sunamganj was thrown down, and the old cutcherry and the residence of the Subdivisional Officer only escaped because they were made of reeds, plaister, and timber instead of masonry. The residence of the Subdivisional Officer at Habiganj was also wrecked. In Maulavi Bazar and Karimganj no damage was done to public buildings, and very little injury was done even to the masonry buildings on tea gardens in the south of the district. The banks of the rivers, especially in the north, caved in and many people were drowned.

The list of casualties as finally reported was 545,
distributed as follows: Sylhet town
Casualties. 55, North Sylhet (rural area) 178,
Sunamganj 287, Habiganj 7, South Sylhet 8, Karimganj
10. These figures clearly show the enormous difference
between the violence of the shock as experienced in the
north and south of the district. In Sylhet town most
of the casualties were due to the collapse of masonry
buildings. The prisoners in the jail had a most fortunate
escape. At the time when the earthquake occurred they
were paraded in the yard preparatory to being locked up
for the night, and had the shock come half an hour later,
hundreds would in all probability have been killed.
Most of the deaths in the mofussil were due to drowning,

the unfortunate people being precipitated from the falling banks into the river, or swamped in the boats in which they were travelling at the time. One hundred and seventy-nine of the deaths in the Sunamganj subdivision were said to be due to drowning, 87 to the collapse of buildings, and 13 to the people having fallen into fissures in the earth. The Deputy Commissioner reported that there were several apparently authenticated instances of persons having been swallowed up like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. In one case in Habiganj an old woman was sitting in an *akhra*,* when the ground opened exactly beneath her and she disappeared. In another case in Sunamganj, a man and his wife were standing on the bank of a river, when a fissure suddenly opened near the woman, into which she fell. The husband caught her by the hair to save her, but finding his own position insecure let go his hold. The woman sank into the crevasse, and her body was not recovered.

The village of Jugirgaon, opposite Sunamganj, subsided into the river, and there were 39 casualties in this place alone. Joy-nagar Bazar suffered a like fate, and here too 29 deaths occurred. Sunamganj itself escaped, but most of the people, traders and pleaders, high and low, were so alarmed that they left on the morning of the 13th, or took up their residence in boats. Out of some 90 masonry buildings in the subdivision, only five or six were left standing, and nearly 6,000 reed and walled houses are said to have been destroyed. Most of these huts were,

* A kind of Vaishnavite monastery to which, however, women are admitted.

however, old and unsound, and would not in any case have lasted very much longer, so that under this head the material loss to the people was not large. Comparatively little damage was done to the district roads with the exception of the road from Sunamganj to Pagla, and from Salutikar to Companyganj. No less than six fine bridges on the latter road were ruined, and the light railway running from Companyganj to Therriaghat was wrecked. Considerable damage was also done to the Assam-Bengal Railway in the south of the district, as the banks had been but recently constructed and had not had time to be properly consolidated.

Elephants are sometimes found in the hilly country on the southern frontier of the district, but are far from common. The two horned rhinoceros is also said to have been seen in that locality, but is extremely rare. Tigers are not very common, though they are found both in the north and south of the district; leopards are not so scarce. Wild buffalo are occasionally found in the swamps at the foot of the Khasi Hills, and wild pig, sambar (*cervus unicolor*), hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), and swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*) can be shot in the same locality. Small game include various kinds of duck and teal, snipe, jungle fowl, and marsh partridge. In 1903 only three persons were killed by wild animals, *i.e.*, one by a tiger and two by wild pigs, but snakes were responsible for 75 deaths. Rewards were paid in that year for the destruction of 11 tigers and 10 leopards.

Statement A.

THANA.				No. OF MARSHES.
SUNAMGANJ	...	{ Tahirpur	...	28
		{ Dharmapasha	...	40
		{ Dirai	...	31
		{ Sunamganj	...	70
		{ Jagannathpur	...	18
		{ Chhatak	...	25
HABIGANJ	...	{ Lakhai	...	7
		{ Mudhabpur	...	5
		{ Baniyachung and Abidabad	...	10
		{ Habiganj	...	5
		{ Muchikandi	...	3
		{ Nabiganj	...	7
NORTH SYLHET ..	{	Biswanath	...	6
		Balaganj	...	14
		Sylhet	...	7
		Fenchuganj	...	8
		Goyainghat	...	16
		Golapganj	...	1
SOUTH SYLHET ...	{	Kanairghat	...	16
		Maulavi Bazar	...	24
		Matiganj	...	11
		Rajnagar	...	27
KARIMGANJ	...	{ Karimganj	...	31
		{ Ratabari and Patharkaudi	...	4
		{ Jaldhuh	...	94

Statement B.

<i>Names of Haors.</i>	<i>Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.</i>
Banaiya in Pargana Dulali or about 22 miles S. W. from Sylhet.	
(1) Baram	in Pargana Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Bar Haor	„ „ Muktarpur or about 12 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
Barsoula	„ Parganas Baje Jatna and Duhalia or about 18 miles W. from Sylhet.
Barua	„ Pargana Renga or about 10 miles S. S. E. from Sylhet.
(1) Benka	„ „ Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Chatal	„ „ Gaharpur or about 12 miles S. from Sylhet.
Chaptihaor	„ „ Naigang or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
(2) Dekharhaor	„ „ Pagla or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.
Ghuldhuba	„ „ Baniyachung or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Gungijuri	„ „ Mandarkandi or about 36 miles S. S. W. from Sylhet.
(1) Habibpur	„ „ Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Hail or Baruna in Pargana Chowalis or about 45 miles S. by W. from Sylhet.	
Hailar haor in Parganas Sukhair and Betal W. S. W. from Sylhet.	
Hailka	in Pargana Regna or about 10 miles S. S. E. from Sylhet.
Hakaluki	„ „ Pathariya or about 22 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
(4) Jamaikata	„ „ Atusjan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.

Statement B—contd.

<i>Names of Haors.</i>	<i>Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.</i>
(3) Jhinker haor in Pargana	Ichakalas or about 16 miles N. W. from Sylhet.
(3) Jilkar haor „ „	Ichakalas or about 16 miles N. W. from Sylhet.
(2) Jawar „ „	Lakhansiri or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.
Kagapasha „ „	Baniyachung or about 35 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Kawadighi „ „	Samsarnagar or about 25 miles S. W. from Sylhet.
Maijal „ „	Gaharpur or about 12 miles S. from Sylhet.
(1) Maka „ „	Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
(1) Makalkandi „ „	Baniyachung or about 40 miles S. W. W. from Sylhet.
Makarsi „ „	Muktarpur or about 17 miles S. from Sylhet.
(4) Mahai „ „	Atujan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
Muktarpur „ „	Muktarpur or about 12 miles S. E. from Sylhet.
(4) Nalua „ „	Atujan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
(4) Parua „ „	Atujan or about 25 miles W. S. W. from Sylhet.
(5) Sanir haor „ „	Laur or about 50 to 60 miles W. N. W. from Sylhet.
(2) Shurash „ „	Duhalia or about 30 miles W. by N. from Sylhet.

Statement B—concl'd.

<i>Names of Haors.</i>	<i>Pargana in which situated and approximate distance from Sylhet town.</i>
Soulagarh in Pargana	Baje Jutua or about 18 miles W. from Sylhet.
Sowlahaor „ „	Baraya or about 6 miles E. from Sylhet.
(5) Tangua „ „	Bangsikunda or about 50 to 60 miles W. N. W. from Sylhet.
Togarhaor „ „ (Ramdigla)	Selbaras or about 60 miles W. from Sylhet.

NOTE.—The numbers prefixed to certain names indicate that the haors bearing the same number are joined with one another when the floods are at their height and become large sheets of water interspersed with jungle.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Early history—Gaur—Lam and Baniyachanng—Koch invasions—The Jaintia Parganas—Sylhet under British rule—Khasi raids—Disputes on Cachar frontier—Riots at Sylhet—The Burmese war—Lushai raids—Floods—European settlers—The cowry currency—Development of excise system—Early salaries—Public buildings—Sylhet in 1837—The mutiny year—Archæological remains.

Little is known of the history of Sylhet, but, like other countries in the early stages of civilization, it seems to have been split up into a number of petty chiefships. These were administered by little princelings, who enjoyed a certain degree of independence, though dominated at first by the Tippera State, and afterwards by the Muhammadans. The present Raja of Hill Tippera traces his family back to Drujho, one of the lunar race of kings, whose descendant Dwitya is said to have fled after the battle of Kurukshetra to the jungles of Hill Tippera.* It is possible that the ancestors of the Raja originally came, as is alleged, from Central India ; but there seems to be little doubt that the Tipperas are closely allied with the Bodo or Kacharis, and it is generally thought that a considerable portion of the present inhabitants of Sylhet were originally descended from that stock. With regard to the claim made by the royal family to more exalted lineage, it should be borne in mind that more than one matrimonial alliance has been made

* *Vide* report submitted to the Bengal Government by the Political Agent to Hill Tippera in 1875.

with the reigning houses of Cachar and Manipur, a fact which is not without its own significance.

A thousand years ago the Karimganj subdivision seems to have been included in the Tippera kingdom. In 640 A.D. the Raja wished to perform a sacrifice on an unusually imposing scale, and obtained five Brahmans from the Itwah village in Kanouj to preside over the ceremonies. Subsequently, with the object of retaining the holy men in this outlandish corner of the world, he gave them a grant of land which is said to have been situated in the Panchakhanda pargana in the Karimganj subdivision. This land was bounded on the north and west by the Kusiya river, and on the south and east by the villages of Hankala Kukis, a tribe from which the Hakaluki *haor* is said to take its name.* Various tanks and old ruins in the South Sylhet subdivision are ascribed to the descendents of these colonists. In 1195 A.D. a Brahman named Nidhipati, who was descended from one of the five original immigrants from Kanouj, received a grant of land in what is now known as the Ita pargana, from the Tippera king. From this family sprung Bhanu Narayan, who was given the title of Raja as a reward for services rendered in the capture of a rebel. Tradition has it that his house was located on the site now occupied by the Rajnagar thana, and the large tank in the immediate vicinity is said to have been excavated by his orders. His eldest son, named Subid Narayan, built a fort on the

* A note prepared by Babu D. N. Chaudhuri is the authority for this statement and of the account given of Raja Subid Narayan. The copper plate, which is the authority for the grant, is said to be still in existence in Hill Tippera.

Barua hills to the east of the Ita pargana, the ruins of which are to be seen at the present day. A tank called Balda sagar was excavated at the instance of his daughter, but he is best known by the Sagar dighi, a large tank which he had dug, and on the banks of which he proposed to build his house. He was, however, suddenly attacked by a Pathan from Murshidabad named Khowaj Osman, and in disgust committed suicide while worshipping in the family temple. A few years later Khowaj Osman, the ruins of whose fort is still to be seen in the Ita hills in the Srisurjya mauza, rose in revolt with other zamindars, and seized parganas Ita, Taraf, and Sylhet, but was subdued by Lodi Khan, grandson of Surwar Khan.

Gaur, or North Sylhet, was originally ruled by a line of Hindu kings. Nothing is known either of their dynasty or fortunes, and they were probably petty local princes with less power and influence than that enjoyed by a big zamindar of Bengal at the present day. The downfall of the last Raja, Gaur Gobind, is said to have been due to his severity towards a follower of the Prophet. This man had sacrificed a cow to celebrate the birth of a son. As the animal was being dismembered a kite swooped down, caught up a piece of flesh, and dropped it in the house of a holy Brahman. On the matter being reported to the king, he ordered the unfortunate infant to be killed and cut off the father's hand. The man applied to his co-religionists for help, and an army was despatched under Sikandar Shah, but met with no success. A second force was then sent under Sayed Nasir Dey, which was

**Gaur or North
Sylhet.**

accompanied by the famous fakir Shah Jalal. This man had been born in Yemen in Arabia, and had been sent by his uncle to Hindustan. He had been given a sample of earth and had been ordered to settle wherever he might find earth of the same character as the sample he took with him. Shah Jalal crossed the Brahmaputra and the Surma on a *mocholla* or praying seat, and proceeded to reduce Gaur Gobind by methods which no ordinary man could be expected to resist. The Hindu Raja had built himself a magical seven-storied tower, to which he retreated on the approach of the invaders. Shah Jalal each day offered up a solemn prayer, at the conclusion of which one of the stories of the tower collapsed. Gaur Gobind endured this mysterious destruction of his fortress for four days and then surrendered, and Shah Jalal, who, in the course of his prayers, had discovered that the earth of Sylhet resembled that of his uncle's sample, determined to take up his permanent abode in the newly conquered town. The administration of the country was made over to Sikandar Shah, and a mosque was erected for the great fakir who was really responsible for the victory. The mosque in which his bones now rest is regarded as a place of the greatest sanctity, and the tombs of his 360 disciples are still to be seen in almost every part of the town.* The defeat of Gaur Gobind took place in 1384 A. D., and from that time onward this portion of the district was ruled by the Muhammadans.

* The authorities on the subject of Shah Jalal are a note by Dr. Wise in J. A. S. B., Vol. 42, Pt. I., and an account of Sylhet written in 1874 by Sumbhoo Chunder Dey Munsif. Dr. Bloch is of opinion that the narrative of Shah Jalal's life is so thickly overgrown with fiction that it remains a matter of doubt whether he is a historical person at all. It is said that he died in 1195 A. D., and if this date is correct he obviously could have had nothing to do with the conquest of Sylhet.

At the time of the conquest of Sylhet by the Muhammadans, Laur, which is situated in the north-west corner of the district, was ruled by a line of Hindu princes.* This family traced its origin to a Brahman named Keshab Misra, who had left Kanouj to seek his fortunes in the east. One of his descendants, named Ramnath, had three sons, the eldest of whom remained at Laur, while the second had a palace built for him at Jagannathpur, and the youngest was established at Baniyachung. The eldest son had no descendants, and Durbar Khan, the head of the Jagannathpur branch, seized the whole of Laur, much to the disgust of Gobind Singh who was ruling at Baniyachung. On Durbar Khan's death, Gobind Singh endeavoured to obtain his share of Laur, but Durbar Khan's sons appealed to the Nawab of Murshidabad, who arrested Gobind Singh and carried him off to Murshidabad. There he was converted to the faith of Islam, and as a reward was given possession of the estates at Laur, though as a feudatory and no longer as an independent princeling. In 1744 A.D. Laur was burned by the Khasis, and many of the people moved to Baniyachung, where Abed Reza, the son of Gobind Singh, had already made his home. It was about this time that a tribute of 48 long boats was imposed on Baniyachung, and subsequently three-fourths of the estates were assessed to revenue. Abed Reza built a large fort in Laur, the ruins of which are to be seen at the present day, and his son Umed excavated a deep moat round Baniyachung. The descendants of this noble house are

* Most of the information embodied in the following paragraph is merely traditional, and has been supplied to me by Babu Padmanath Bhattacharya Bidyabinod, M.A.

still living in that village, but have lost their wealth and influence and are in very reduced circumstances.

Another version of the origin of Baniyachung is that a merchant, who was travelling with a crew of Chung or Namasudra boatmen, anchored in the *haor* over the site on which the village was subsequently built. An image of the goddess Kali was in the boat. During the night the merchant dreamed that the goddess declined to leave the place, and informed him that, if he would only settle there a Brahman would become the ruler of the town. The waters gradually disappeared, as they do at the present day on the cessation of the rains, and a village was founded by the pious merchant. The first Raja was a Brahman named Keshab Misra. One of his descendants, Gobind, quarrelled with the governor of Sylhet, and was summoned to Delhi where he embraced the moslem faith. The story of the Baniya and his Chungs would seem, however, to belong to the category of myths.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century Silarai, the brother of the great Koch king
Koch invasions. Nar Narayan, is said to have defeated the Raja of Sylhet. The territories of this prince were near those of the Jaintia Raja, and he is described as being a very powerful monarch. As has been already pointed out, Sylhet proper had been conquered by the Muhammadans two centuries before, but it is possible that the chronicler may be referring to the king of Laur, or to some quasi-independent Raja south of the

Kusiyara.* The battle lasted for three days, and was finally decided by a furious charge, headed by Silarai in person, in which the king himself and an immense number of his followers went down. His brother Asirai abandoned the unequal contest, and returned with Silarai to the court of Nar Narayan. The Koch prince restored to him his brother's kingdom, but imposed a tribute of 100 elephants, 200 horses, Rs. 3,00,000 and 10,000 gold coins, an assessment which must obviously have been a polite invention of the chronicler.†

The account given of 'Sircar Sylhet' in the *Ain Akbari* is very brief, and is largely taken up with the description of two birds, a fact which suggests that the author of this, the earliest of Indian gazetteers, knew but little of his subject, or he would hardly have had recourse to such uninteresting padding. Sylhet is said to be "very mountainous,"—save the mark—and to furnish many eunuchs for the seraglios. The products mentioned are soontara, "a delicious fruit in colour like an orange but of an oblong form," China root, and lignum aloes, and the military strength is put down at 1,100 cavalry, 190 elephants, and 42,920 infantry.

The Jaintia Parganas are situated in the north-east corner of the district, and stretch from Therriaghat to the Cachar frontier

* The Muhammadans do not seem to have had a very firm grip upon their conquest and the Tipperas are said to have overrun Sylhet for a short time in the sixteenth century.

† The Koch King's of Kamarupa by E. A. Gait, Shillong, 1895, page 27.

along the base of the Jaintia Hills.* To the south they are roughly bounded by the Surma river—roughly, for pargana Satbank lies on the left side of that river, while between Golapganj and Sylhet there is a block of permanently settled land, which does not form part of Jaintia, extending as far north as Salutikar.

The territory of the Jaintia Rajas included, in addition to this portion of Sylhet, the hills inhabited by the Syntengs, and from time to time they succeeded in exercising some control over the country lying between the Jaintia Hills and the Kalang in the Assam Valley. How the Syntengs came to be united under a single ruler, while their neighbours and kinsmen on the west remained split up into a number of petty principalities, we do not know. History is equally silent with regard to the manner in which the Jaintia Rajas became the rulers and absolute owners of a tract of land in the plains of Sylhet, which at the present day is largely inhabited by Muhammadans. The royal family were of Synteng origin, and, though they had for many years been under the influence of Hinduism, they still retained the curious Khasi custom of inheritance through the female. This custom ultimately brought about their downfall, as it was the desire of the Raja's sister for a son that led to the kidnapping and sacrifice of British subjects.

* These fragments of Jaintia history prior to 1774 A. D. are taken from the Ahom Buranjia and a paper by Mr. E. A. Gait published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Vol. LXIV, Part I, No. 3, page 242.

The following is a list of the Jaintia Rajas as recorded by tradition. Against the names of four of them have been inserted the dates at which from the evidence of coins, inscriptions, and the Ahom chronicles it appears that they were living :—

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Parbat Ray. | 13. Pratapa-Singh. |
| 2. Majha Gosain. | 14. Lakshmi-Narayana (1710 A. D.) |
| 3. Burlia Parbat Ray. | 15. Ram-Singh. |
| 4. Bara Gosain. | 16. Jaya-Narayana. |
| 5. Vijaya Manik. | 17. Bara Gosain (1731-1770 A. D.) |
| 6. Pratapa Ray. | 18. Chattra-Singh. |
| 7. Dhan Manik (1618 A. D.) | 19. Vijaya-Narayana. |
| 8. Jasa Manik. | 20. Rama-Singh (1813 A. D.) |
| 9. Sunder Ray. | 21. Indra Singh. |
| 10. Chota Parbat Ray. | 22. Rajendra-Singh, until the |
| 11. Jasamanta Ray. | annexation in 1835 A. D. |
| 12. Vana-Singh. | |

In the latter part of the sixteenth century, the Jaintia Raja, like the king of Sylhet, was reduced to a state of vassalage by the Koch king Nar Narayan. But the decline of the Koches was as rapid as their rise, and the Jaintia king must soon have succeeded in throwing off their yoke. According to tradition, the Raja was forbidden to mint coins in his own name ; and this perhaps is why so few have been found which bear the name of the king in whose reign they were struck. The Jaintia coinage was made of unusually base metal, and two rupees which were assayed in 1836 were valued at 3 annas and 4 annas 9 pie respectively.

Dhan Manik is said to have been at war with the Kacharis at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and, in order to enlist

Conquest of Jaintia by Ahoms in 17th century.

the Ahoms on his side, offered to give his daughter to their Raja, Pratap Singh, if he would send to fetch her through the Kachari country. The ruse was successful, the Ahoms became involved in war with the Kacharis, and the Jaintia Raja was delivered from his enemies. His successor Jasa Manik, so the story goes, went to Kuch Bihar where he married a Koch princess. With her dowry he received the image of Jainteswari, or Kali, which subsequently attained so evil a notoriety on account of the human sacrifices offered to it, sacrifices which ultimately led to the downfall of the Raja. At the beginning of the eighteenth century Ram Singh, the Raja of that time, kidnapped the Raja of Cachar, who had retired through the hills before the armies of the greatest of the Ahom kings, Rudra Singh. The Kachari prince applied to his former enemy for help, armies were despatched through the North Cachar and Jaintia Hills, the two princes were arrested and taken to the Assam Valley, and Jaintia was annexed to the Ahom territories. The Raja himself has no claim upon our sympathies, as he seems to have been entirely responsible for his own discomfiture. But, then as ever, it was a case of *quidquid delirant reges plectuntur Achivi*, and the fate of his wretched subjects was truly lamentable. Jaintiapur was plundered and burnt, about a thousand persons were tortured to death, and even the women were not spared but were deprived of their ears and noses.* Rudra Singh formally notified the Muhammadan fauzdar of Sylhet that Jaintia had passed into his possession, and the two Governments prepared to exchange lists of the

* An Ahom chronicle is the authority for this statement.

products of their respective countries, with the object of facilitating trade. But though their monarch had submitted, the hardy mountainers, over whom his rule was ever of the lightest, declined to accept an alien yoke. They rose as one man, butchered the Ahom garrisons in the hills, and resumed their former free and easy life. The Jaintia Raja died in captivity, but his heir was established on the throne, and the Ahoms made no further attempt to exercise an effective jurisdiction over the territory entrusted to him. Communications were, however, maintained between the two valleys, and in 1757, envoys from Jaintia are said to have been received by the Ahom king in the portico of the Hajo temple, and to have complained that the Sonapur duar had been closed by the Khairam Raja. The king ordered it to be opened as trade between the valley and the hills was doubtless highly advantageous to both parties.

The first occasion on which the Jaintia Parganas were entered by the British was in 1774 A.D. when Major Henniker led a force against the Raja. The causes which provoked this expedition are not on record, but some years afterwards the Collector comments on the excellent effect produced, and on the correct attitude of the Jaintia people towards our frontier as compared with the insolent violence of the Khasis.

In 1821, some emissaries from this State were detected in the act of kidnapping British subjects, with the object of sacrificing them at the shrine of Kali. One of the culprits admitted that human sacrifices had been

annually offered for at least ten years, in the hope that the sister of the Raja might, through the intercessions of the goddess Kali, be blessed with offspring. The princess was always present on the occasion of each sacrifice, and bathed her person in the blood of the victim, whose throat was cut by the officiating priest.* Suitable punishment was meted out, and a solemn warning was given to the Raja that any repetition of this offence would be followed by the confiscation of his territories. In 1824, he entered into an agreement with Mr. David Scott by which he acknowledged himself to be dependant on the British Government, and pledged himself to abstain from entering into any negotiation with a foreign power. Three years later, a second attempt was made upon the liberties of British subjects, and in 1832, a similar attempt was at last crowned with success. Three out of the four men seized were sacrificed to Kali; the fourth escaped and reported the outrage to the authorities. The Raja was called upon to deliver up the culprits, and, as he declined to do so, his territories in the plains were annexed in 1835.

The rest of Sylhet passed into the hands of the East India Company in 1765. The first
Sylhet under British rule. resident to be appointed was Mr. Thackeray, the grandfather of the famous novelist, who built a large house near the site on which the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner now stands. He was succeeded by Mr. Holland, who made a regular settlement of the district; and in 1779 came Mr. Robert Lindsay, who acted as Collector for upwards of ten years, and of

* Asiatic Journal, Vol. XIII, p. 177.

whose administration there is an interesting account in the Lives of the Lindsays. A British district has obviously no history which can be reproduced in a condensed form in chronological tables. Many years are barren of incident, the crops are sown and reaped, the traders come and go, one generation gradually melts into another and there is nothing for the chronicler to report. The laws which govern the actions of the people are passed elsewhere, the orders by which the Collector of Sylhet is guided are issued at Dacca and Calcutta, the district is part of a corporate whole and is no longer a separate entity, to work out its ruin or salvation for itself. At the same time, interesting letters can be found which enable us to trace the gradual development of the administration, and in the following pages reference is made to such arrangements or events as seem of interest. No allusion has been made to the land revenue history, as this extremely complicated subject is dealt with in the chapter on land revenue.

Under Mughal, and for some time under British rule, Sylhet was a frontier district, and
Frontier troubles.
The Khasis. was exposed to all the inconveniences that such a position usually entails. The Khasis were a continual source of trouble to the Muhammadans, and it was not long before they came into collision with the British. Difficulties seem to have first arisen in 1779. A letter from the Collector in that year refers to the value of the trade between Calcutta and Panduah, a village situated near Bholaganj, which a hundred years ago occupied the position which is enjoyed by Chhatak at the

present day. The Khasis seem to have been encouraged to adopt an offensive attitude by the conduct of some 'low Europeans,' who had treated them with undue deference ; and Mr. Lindsay was compelled to ask for sanction to the construction of a small fort, surrounded by a brick wall, which would afford protection to the merchants. The first serious outbreak, after Sylhet came under British rule, occurred in 1783, when the Khasis demanded the head of a havildar, whom they charged with having treated them with contumely. This calm request was naturally refused, whereupon they attacked the thana, and there was "considerable loss on both sides." Mr. Lindsay's own lime works did not escape, and his servants, so he says, were cut to pieces. Four years later the Khasis of Laur joined forces with the people inhabiting the submontane tracts ; ravaged the parganas of Atgram, Selharas, Bangsikunda, Ramdiga and Betal, and put to death upwards of 300 people.* Troops were despatched without delay to the foot of the hills, but they found that the raiders had already retreated to their mountain strongholds.

A few months later Mr. Lindsay left Sylhet, and the office of Collector was assumed by Mr. **The Khasis and Mr. Willes.** John Willes, a gentleman who does not seem to have been endowed by nature with the character and temper that are best adapted for the administration of a turbulent and frontier district. At the end of 1788 a Khasi freebooter, named Ganga Singh, plundered the bazar and thana at Ishamati, and put to death one Bara Chaudri with his family. A native officer was then

* Collector's letter No. 84, dated 26th October 1787.

deputed to enquire into the condition of the submontane tracts, and he reported that the people had been reduced by the Khasis to a state of abject misery and were living on grass and fish.* Panduah was garrisoned by a force of sepoy, but in June 1789, the Khasis made a bold attack upon the place, and killed several of the rank and file. Two European merchants who were staying in the village escaped with difficulty, and the thanadar was at first reported to be killed. Mr. Willes at once addressed the Government at Calcutta, but seems to have been reluctant to take any action on his own responsibility. A force was sent to relieve Panduah which achieved its object, to the great satisfaction of the Collector, "without bloodshed," and in all his dealings with these savages he unfortunately displayed a mildness of character which only confirmed them in their lawless inclinations. His temper can be judged from a letter to Lieutenant Cheape, who was in command of the sepoy on the frontier, in which the following sentences occur: "I must conclude in entreating you in the strongest terms to shew in future all possible lenity to such persons as may be so unfortunate as to be wounded. . . . I further entreat you that in no instance the sepoy be allowed to fire on any person except when in the direct act of opposition."

The Collector admitted to the Supreme Government that he had no authority on the northern frontier of his district, and that, if he were to summon the Khasi sirdar of any of the 137 villages cultivated by the Sylhet raiyats, "he would refuse to obey, threaten, and probably cut off

* Collector's letter No. 123, dated 19th February 1789.

the head of the messenger, and then call down his relations from the hills to revenge what he would consider an insult." But while making these admissions, he does not seem to have been fully sensible of the desirability of making some attempt, at any rate, to assert the Company's authority. Some of his observations on the policy to be adopted were just enough. He pointed out that, since Major Henniker's expedition into Jaintia in 1774, the people of that country had abstained from raids into Sylhet, that submission and conciliatory measures had merely incited the savages to further violence, and that the Khasis must be taught that they were attacking the Company, and not the fauzdar of Sylhet, with whom in the times of the Mughals they seem to have carried on an intermittent warfare. He was, however, better in council than in action, and he does not seem to have made any attempt to personally suppress the disorders in his district. "Punishment," he wrote to Lord Cornwallis, "can hereafter be given, but that should not be attempted rashly by a Collector, whose passions may be engaged, whose motive may be suspected, and whose character may be implicated." He concluded by requesting that the Governor-General would act on his own discretion, as he, the Collector, was not well acquainted with the condition of the Khasis. Troops were, however, despatched to Panduah who quieted the hillmen for a time, but in 1795, the Khasis again raided on the plains.

In 1799, the Collector reported that the district had been freed from the vexatious inroads of the hillmen, and proposed that the submontane parganas should be measured up, as this

Ultimate pacifica-
tion.

work had been left undone by Mr. Willes owing to the unsettled condition of the frontier. The Khasis seem at this time to have given little trouble, and in 1825 a medical man was deputed to report on Cherra Punji ; but two years later a sepoy, a *dákwallah*, and a *dhobi* were murdered by the hillmen in the neighbourhood of Panduah. The Collector of that time was not the man to tolerate such outrages, and in the absence of the Agent to the Governor-General, he took upon himself to request the officer commanding the Sylhet Light Infantry to retaliate on the parties concerned, and, if they were in open arms against the Honb'le Company, to take such steps as might be necessary for their restraint. The steps taken seem to have been sufficient, but in 1831, two years after the massacre at Nongkhlaio, a raid was made upon the village of Kanta Kal. The raiders were dispersed by the Sylhet Light Infantry under Captain Lister, and since that date the Khasis have ceased to be a source of anxiety or embarrassment to the Administration.

Trouble was, however, experienced on the eastern as well as on the northern frontier. In 1799, a Mughal, named Aga Muhammad Reza, entered Cachar from Sylhet, and for a time seems to have succeeded in making himself master of that country. He seduced the Naga Kukis from their allegiance, cut up some *borkandazes* sent against him by the Raja, and compelled that prince to take refuge in the hills. He then assumed the character and attributes of a prophet, styled himself Immaum Mehadri, and sent 1,200 of his followers to attack the Company's thana at Bon-dassye. This thana was garrisoned by one havildar and

Disputes on Cachar
frontier.

eight sepoys. The Kacharis are said to have attacked this small force with 300 men and two three-pounder guns, but they were repulsed with some loss, after a smart engagement. The attack was renewed under the personal direction of the prophet, but in the meanwhile the thana garrison had been reinforced by 70 sepoys, and the Kacharis were driven back, with a loss of 90 men and 5 small pieces of cannon. Their leader made his escape, but was subsequently arrested, and peace and tranquillity were soon restored. So strong, however, had been his influence that many Hindus in the eastern portion of Sylhet are said to have abjured their faith and turned Muhamadan.

A few years later disputes arose with regard to the boundary between Sylhet and Cachar. In 1807, a line was laid down by an *amin*, but very shortly after the completion of the work, the Raja's people trespassed upon the estate of one Mooluck Chund, filled up the ditches which had been dug along the boundary, and carried off the crops. An *amin* was again deputed to lay down the line, but, as soon as the crops ripened for the following harvest, the Raja's people again appeared upon the scene. Raids were also made on pargana Chapghat, and the crops were forcibly cut and carried off. Stringent orders were accordingly issued to the native officer at the Badarpur thana to 'prevent these savage intruders from committing such ravages'; but subsequently it was found that Mooluck Chund's title to the land was very doubtful, and it appeared that the line laid down by the *amin* included a portion of the Raja's territory.

**Disputes with Raja
of Cachar.**

Trouble, however, was experienced from within as well as on the frontier. The natives of the district were turbulent and unruly, and, as is not unfrequently the case in frontier tracts, had little respect for the majesty of the law. In 1779, a havildar and ten sepoys were despatched to put an auction purchaser in possession of his newly acquired estates in Balisira. The former proprietor resisted the officers of the law by force, killed two and wounded several others, and effectually prevented them from carrying out their orders. Not content with this, he proceeded to plunder two boats loaded with upwards of two thousand rupees worth of cowries, the property of Government. A stronger force was then sent from Sylhet which succeeded in giving the auction purchaser possession, and the former owner fled. But he fled only to return again with a large body of men, who surprised and fired the cutcherry, cut down the sepoys who offered them resistance, and made the others prisoner. The outlaw was, however, compelled again to fly, and was subsequently arrested by the authorities at Dacca.

Three years later there was a serious outbreak during the *Maharram* at Sylhet, of which the following account was given by Mr. Lindsay :—*

**Riots at Sylhet
in 1782.**

“At this last place (Sylhet) the Musalmans had become uncommonly violent. The period of the *Maharram*, or annual festival of the Islam faith, was approaching, when a deputation from the Hindu inhabitants came privately to inform me that

* *Vide Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, page 355.*

they had certain intelligence that the Mahammadans meditated an assault upon our Government on that day, and that it would likely commence by an attack on the Hindu temples in the town. I told them that I could not believe it, as they had hitherto shown no indication of riot. My military force at that time being a good deal scattered in the Province, not more than forty or fifty men could be mustered fit for duty, and I desired my *jemadar*, or black officer, to have all in readiness in case of a fray. Nothing occurred during the day of the festival, until five in the evening, when the Hindu inhabitants rushed into my house in numbers, covered with marks of violence they had received from Mahammadans. I went into my room for a few minutes, dressed my pistols and gave them to my favourite black servant, desiring him to keep near me, and, if he saw me in danger, to put them into my hand. I carried a light horseman's sword under my arm. There was no time for delay, as the town was on fire in different directions. With my small force I marched to the place where the crowd was collected, and found to my surprise that the numbers were much more considerable than I expected. As I advanced they retired to a strong position upon a hill, and there took post. I followed them to the top, and drew up my sepoy on a table-ground directly opposite to them, where they stood with shouldered arms. I then went forward with my black officer to hold a parley on the spot. I found their leader a priest of considerable rank, at the head of three hundred men. He was insolent in his manner. I was perfectly calm. I told him that I presented myself before him in the capacity of Head Magistrate; that I was informed a fray had happened, which I would investigate next day, and render justice where due; that my object at that moment was to compel him to lay down his arms and retire peaceably. He immediately drew his sword, and exclaiming with a loud voice, "This is the day to kill or to die,—the reign of the English is at an end!" aimed a heavy blow at my head. This I was fortunate enough to parry; but he struck so hard that my sword was broken, and a little more than the hilt remained in my hand. My black servant at the same moment thrust a pistol into my hand, which I instantly fired, and the priest fell; and so close were we in contact that his clothes were set on fire. My sepoy in the rear, seeing my dangerous situation, discharged a platoon while I stood in front, from which I miraculously escaped. My black officer and I rushed back into the ranks in time to prevent their giving way. We then charged with bayonets and drove the armed multitude over the hill.

"I had now time to look about me and survey the mischief that had been done in so short a time. The high priest and his two brothers were lying dead on the ground, and many of his dependents were wounded. On my side one sepoy was killed and six wounded. Most fortunately my people did not give way—if they had, every European in the place would have fallen. I now asked for my assistant, Mr.—, who I supposed had been killed; he soon appeared, and candidly informed me that the scene was too much for his nerves, and that he had retired during the combat. This event was of too serious a nature not to be reported to Government. They immediately ordered a reinforcement of troops, supposing me under temporary difficulty; but the tumult soon subsided, and the order was countermanded."

Mr. Lindsay was a firm and resolute Collector, but the strength of his conviction that there would be no renewal of the disturbances, and his refusal of the proffered reinforcements, suggests that the number of rioters who fell was larger than he felt disposed to say. Again in 1786, one Radha Ram, a zamindar on the eastern frontier of the district, attacked the Chargola thana, with a following of Kukis, and killed and harried the villagers. Mr. Lindsay promptly despatched some sepoys to the place with instructions to burn the villages of Radha Ram's people, and to lift his cattle; and in a very short time the zamindar himself was seized. The letter that reports his capture to Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Shore curtly announces the annoying fact that a tribe of hillmen had surprised the thana of Laur, killed the thanadar and twenty of his men, and made their way back into their mountain fastnesses. During the declining days of Mughal rule the administration had been lax, and it was some years before the people learned that the authority of the Company could not be set at defiance with impunity. The fact that at this time there

were neither criminal nor civil courts in Sylhet was also said to be a source of difficulty. Suitors had to proceed to Sultansi which was a considerable distance from their homes.

The aggressive conduct of the Burmese in 1824 caused some anxiety in Sylhet. Troops ^{Burmese War in 1824.} were at once pushed up to the frontier fort at Badarpur, and, when the enemy approached, they advanced into Cachar and inflicted a severe defeat upon them at Bikrampur. The Burmese then withdrew, but in June it was reported that they were again advancing, and, in spite of the inclement weather, reinforcements were hastily despatched towards the frontier. Sylhet itself escaped the inconvenience of a raid, but great difficulty was experienced in obtaining transport for the expedition. Boats, which had to be sent up to Badarpur, were manned by 50 persons, most of whom were witnesses who were waiting to give evidence at the cutcherry and had been summarily impressed ! " With the greatest difficulty and by subjecting our own subjects to the most dreadful privations and sufferings " 7,000 men were gradually collected, but they charged the guards who were set over them, and broke through every opposition. Apart from their reluctance to accompany the expedition, the Commissioner doubted whether the coolies would be able to carry to Manipur more than the provisions required for their own consumption on the way. The people fled panic stricken from their homes to escape impressment, the fields remained untilled, and the Magistrate was compelled to warn the General in Command that famine might ensue. Stories of the impressment of

the people travelled up to the Khasi Hills, and added to the difficulty of obtaining labour when the road to Assam was being constructed in 1829. The Khasis are, and always have been, an extremely independent people, and the accounts they heard of the way in which coolies had been seized in Sylhet at first rendered them disinclined to do any work for Government.

About the time that Sylhet was freed from the fear of marauding raiders from the north, the wild tribes from the southern hills began to make incursions on the plains.

Raid from the South. Kuki outrage in 1826.

The first outrage on record occurred in 1826, when a party of wood-cutters was murdered by Kukis. Messengers were sent up into the hills, and ascertained that the cause of the outrage was the failure of the zamindars of Pratapgarh to make their customary presents to the tribesmen. The Kukis took this opportunity of clearly laying their demands before the Government, and detained two of the envoys as hostages, while the third was sent to fetch the ransom of the other two. Government paid the money to obtain the release of its two emissaries, and orders were issued for the exclusion of the Kukis from our markets.

In 1844, Sylhet was the scene of a far more serious outrage. Laru, a Poitlu chief of some importance, died, and his son Lal Chokla determined to give him a funeral worthy of his merits. On April 16th, he descended upon the Manipuri colony of Kochabari in Pratapgarh, and in the darkness of the night succeeded in securing twenty heads

Twenty men killed in 1844.

and six living captives. Efforts were made to obtain redress through the Raja of Hill Tippera, and when they proved fruitless, an expedition was despatched, under Captain Blackwood, into the hills. He succeeded in arresting Lal Chokla, who was brought down to the plains, tried, and sentenced to transportation for life, in spite of his plea that he did not know that the Manipuris were under British protection, a plea in which very little reliance could be placed.

Three years later the Kukis again descended from their hills, and massacred upwards of 150 persons. After prolonged investigation, it was ascertained that the scene of the outrage lay outside British territory, and it was left to the Raja of Hill Tippera, in whose country the incident occurred, to take such action as he thought to be desirable. Further raids were, however, made within the boundaries of the district in 1849, and, as even more serious outrages were reported from Cachar, Government determined to send an expedition into the hills. A force was despatched under Colonel Lister which captured one village and then withdrew, as the officer in command did not consider that it was sufficiently strong to justify his advancing further through such difficult country, against so powerful an enemy.

Raids in 1847 and 1849 followed by Colonel Lister's expedition.

In 1862, Sylhet was raided again, three villages about eight miles from Adampur were plundered and burnt, and a large number of the inhabitants massacred and carried off. Government ordered that a strong force of armed

Further raids followed by abortive expedition of 1869.

police should be established somewhere on the Sylhet frontier, and pressure was put upon the Raja of Hill Tippera, as it was thought that his subjects were to some extent responsible for these raids. At the end of 1868, a village near Adampur was again attacked, and as this was only one of several outrages along the southern frontier of the Province, an expedition was despatched into the hills. The climatic conditions were, however, most unfavourable, the central column was detained by seven days' continuous rain which rendered the route impracticable, and the troops were compelled to retire without either rescuing the captives or punishing the guilty tribes.

In January 1871, the village of Kacharipara near the Chargola outpost was burnt, and 20 persons killed, and an attack was made on another village immediately opposite to the outpost. Five weeks later a village near the Alinagar outpost was raided ; but these were merely incidents in the general outbreak that occurred along the frontier. Such continuous and sanguinary raids called for vigorous repressive measures, and in 1871-72, a strong force was sent into the Lushai Hills, the troops advancing in two columns from Cachar and Chittagong. Since that date the peace of the Sylhet district has been undisturbed, though further outrages on other portions of the Indian Empire rendered the annexation of the Lushai Hills a disagreeable but unavoidable necessity.

The history of the Lushais and their raids will be found in greater detail in the gazetteer of the Lushai Hills, and reference has only here been made to the

comparatively small number of outrages perpetrated in Sylhet.

Towards the latter end of the eighteenth century the district suffered from a succession of heavy floods, which, if implicit reliance can be placed upon the records, produced effects of the most appalling character.

Floods and bunds.

In 1781, the country was desolated by an inundation which is described by Mr. Lindsay in the following terms : *

"In 1781, and also in the preceding year, there had never been such bountiful crops of rice, insomuch that the granaries could not contain it, and the value of the commodity was so extremely depreciated that it would not pay the expense of carrying it to market. I was, therefore, under the necessity of stating to Government the total inability of the farmers to pay their rents, especially as, in this poor district, they had not the same resources as elsewhere, rice being our only source of revenue. A suspension of rent was in consequence allowed. No sooner was the indulgence granted than one of those dreadful inundations took place to which the country is subject, which in a few weeks involved the whole country in general calamity. The river, from being very low, rose thirty feet perpendicular, overflowing its banks and sweeping everything before it. A more dreadful scene could not be imagined, nor could relief be given to the numerous objects who were seen perishing in the torrent, — the cattle and wild animals of every description were observed indiscriminately floating down the stream. The granaries upon the banks, filled with the late superabundant harvest, were all swept into the flood, and thus from a general plenty we were in the course of ten days reduced to a state of famine. All was gone excepting a few partial stores on the high grounds. The first thing I did was to despatch express boats in every direction, to bring back the grain we had sent from the Province sometime before, now finding its way to distant markets. In this we succeeded, and part was brought back, but we had a dreadful prospect before us : the greater part of the last year's

* *Vide Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, page 354.*

crop was destroyed, and, what was worse, the rice lately planted was so completely laid under water that it could offer no hope of relief.

"My own case was embarrassing, for I had now to give the Supreme Board an account directly opposite to that I had lately furnished. Government, however, immediately assisted us ; but at the same time, my story appeared so very improbable that they sent up a confidential person to report to them, from ocular demonstration, the actual state of the country. From the scarcity that prevailed, this gentleman never reached me ; but his report of the desolation and misery he saw in the lower country fully corroborated my previous statements, and Government, in consequence, gave much assistance, but I am sorry to say nearly one-third of the population died.

"I must here mention one instance of the industry of the people at this juncture. They sent up and brought rice plants from the seed beds on the high grounds ; but, their low lands being under water, they were obliged to plant them in a manner not altogether new, but seldom practised, and to which I was frequently an eye-witness. The work is carried on in canoes. In one end of the boat were deposited the rice plants, on the other side a heap of well-tempered tenacious clay ; the boatman, holding two or three rice plants in his left hand, attached to each a lump of clay and dropped it into the water ; it thus became anchored in eighteen inches of water. Many hundred acres of ground were thus cultivated ; and this furnished in due time a considerable resource, so as to save many of the inhabitants from famine. In the situation so described, provided the flood during the periodical rains rises gradually, the plant will grow to the height of twelve or fourteen feet, always keeping its head above water ; but if rapidly overflowed and depressed under water, even for one night only, it never recovers.

"Upon going to Dacca a few months afterwards, I saw many instances of men and women diving from their canoes to tear up from the bottom roots of grass and other vegetables as a miserable food for their famished cattle. Nor were the sufferings of the unfortunate natives yet ended. When the new crop was nearly ready for use, no persuasion could prevent them from satisfying their craving appetites, the frequent consequence of which was immediate death, or diseases which occasioned dropsy and dysentery, which destroyed many."

Three years later there were again complaints of flood. The waters, according to the
More floods in 1785.

Collector, rose to a height to which they had never before attained within the memory of man, the houses in the town were most of them submerged, and large quantities of cattle and many human beings perished.* In September, it was said that the country from the banks of the Brahmaputra to Sylhet was like an open sea, dotted over with islands on which the people were living in a pitiable state; that two-thirds of the cattle had died, and that the villagers were endeavouring to save the lives of the remainder by diving to the bottom and scraping up weeds and roots of grass. Early next year, Mr. Lindsay told the Board that over two-thirds of the cattle had been swept away and drowned, or starved from want of fodder, and, that one-fourth of the inhabitants of the low lands had perished, either from starvation, or from the diseases that are commonly induced by unwholesome or insufficient food.† In 1787, the Collector again reported a very serious flood,—the low parganas were entirely under water, the greater part of the cattle were drowned, and those that survived were kept on bamboo rafts. “The face of the whole country exhibits an extensive sea, and, where villages formerly stood, may be seen at a distance little mounds rising out of the waters, which on a nearer approach are perceived to be the wrecks of the habitations of the distressed raiyats. It is painful to recall to your recollection the distress of 1784, at the thought of which humanity

* Collector's letter No. 46, dated 25th June 1784.

† Collector's letter No. 56, dated 13th March 1785.

shudders, but the waters are higher now than they ever were at any period of that year, and the damage is infinitely greater." * There were heavy floods also in 1793 and again in 1795.

Under native rule the Surma had been protected by a dyke, but this work had been allowed to fall into disrepair, and in 1790, **Protective works.** Mr. Willes constructed an embankment for a length of about one hundred miles along the side of that river. Six years before, the Supreme Government had sanctioned the expenditure of Rs. 8,000, on the repair of bunds along the Surma, Kusiya and Manu,† and dykes were also kept in repair by native land-holders at their own expense. In 1814, the idea seems to have gained ground that these bunds were of comparatively little use. They were accordingly allowed to fall into disrepair, and, at the present day, the only one maintained is a dyke along a portion of the Surma river. The annual rainfall is so enormous, the general level of the country is so low, and the whole drainage system is of such a complicated character, that it is extremely difficult to control the action of the rivers. Nullahs and embankments that protect one village may very possibly do damage to another, and the greatest caution has to be exercised when tampering with the drainage of the country.

It is difficult to understand why, at the end of the eighteenth century, Sylhet should have **Were these floods really so severe?** been so much more liable to flood than it is at the present day. It is possible that the whole level of the district has been raised during

* Collector's letter No. 80, dated 11th July 1787.

† No. 38 A. from J. Shore, dated 30th December 1784.

the last hundred years ; it is possible that there was a cycle of exceptionally wet years, just as at the end of the nineteenth century, the rainfall throughout India was exceptionally scanty ; and lastly it is possible that the floods in reality were not abnormally severe, and that what so impressed the imagination of Mr. Lindsay was little more than the usual condition of the country. At the present day almost the whole of the western portion of the district goes under water in the rains. Fodder for the cattle is brought from the hills, or dragged from the bottom as described by the Collector, and the houses of the villagers are crowded together on small islets of highland, which rise up here and there from out of the waste of waters. It is difficult to obtain reliable information with regard to the condition of the people now, it was almost impossible to do so then, and the estimates of mortality, both of men and cattle, were doubtless much exaggerated. The people had the strongest disinclination to pay land revenue, and clutched at any excuse which would relieve them from the necessity of doing so. Even a strong officer like Robert Lindsay experienced the greatest difficulty in realizing the demand, and he was naturally not disposed to minimise any calamity which would help to explain away the large outstanding balances. On more than one occasion the rainfall may possibly have been severe, but it is to be hoped that the sufferings of the people were not so terrible as was supposed.

That there was some distress and scarcity there seems little doubt. In 1788, Mr. Willes reported that rice was selling at Re. 1-8 per maund, though in former years four maunds could be purchased for one

The rice rates however show that there was some distress.

rupee. Such was the general distress that he could not stir from his house without being beset by thousands clamouring for relief.* It must, however, be added that four maunds for a rupee was an exceptionally low rate. In 1786, when rice sold at four and a half maunds to the rupee, the price was said to be so low as barely to cover the cost of cooly hire to the bazar, and in January 1798, the best rice sold at Sylhet for As. 12 a maund. Owing, no doubt, to difficulties of transport, the grain market at that time was subject to sharp variations. Corners in wheat would have had but a short shrift from the administrators of that day. In 1773, the Collector was authorised to notify by beat of drum, that any merchant who concealed his grain and refused to bring it to the market and sell it at a reasonable price, would not only be deprived of all his stock, but would be placed in confinement till orders had been passed upon his case. As a precaution against scarcity the Government had recourse to public granaries, and more than once the Collector was directed to purchase and store a lakh or two of maunds of grain.

The efforts made by France to retain some share of the valuable Indian trade, are illustrated by the action of a certain **European settlers in Sylhet.** M. DeChampigny. This gentleman seems to have come to Sylhet in 1786, with letters of introduction from M. Wilton, the French Commissary. Mr. Lindsay informed the Governor-General that no obstacle would be placed in M. DeChampigny's way, as long as he conducted himself as a private trader. At the same time he pointed out that

* Collector's No. 19, dated 11th February 1788.

the French had never had a public agent in that portion of Bengal, and that they were naturally of an intriguing disposition ; and he hinted pretty plainly that the Frenchman's actions in a turbulent and frontier district, surrounded by savage races who could easily be incited to invade our territory, would always call for careful attention from the Government. M. DeChampigny seems to have lived with Mr. Lindsay, and, during the administration of that vigorous pro-consul, he was wise enough to conceal his real intentions. On the advent of Mr. Willes he ventured to appear in his true colours. He purchased a plot of ground in a very arbitrary manner, the title of the vendor being extremely doubtful. He then began the construction of a fine bungalow, without applying for the consent of Government, as was required by the regulations then in force. When he was in need of stores from the interior, he issued orders on the people under a large seal ; and he claimed to be exempted from the rules that applied to all other traders, under which boats carrying merchandise were compelled to attend at the bunder ghat for registration. He is said to have seized, confined, and fined those persons who offended him. On one occasion he arrested a taluqdar, and, when ordered by the Collector to release him, his servants impudently denied that their master was in any way subject to the authority of Mr. Willes. But, worst of all, he endeavoured to establish political relations with the Khasis, an arrangement to which there were the strongest possible objections. The Khasi Hills were independent territory, Assam and Cachar were still under native rule, and there was serious risk that the French might establish a protectorate on our frontier, which would be a perpetual

source of danger and annoyance. The records are silent with regard to the ultimate fate of this imperious Frenchman. On the outbreak of war in 1804, he probably had to flee the country ; but, for a time at any rate, he was a source of serious annoyance and anxiety to the unhappy Mr. Willes.

In spite of the restrictions imposed on settlers in the interior, there were a considerable number of Europeans in Sylhet a century and more ago. In 1778, Mr. Lindsay despatched two Englishmen, a Frenchman, and a Portuguese to Dacca, 'as no confidence could be placed in them,' and there were still some fourteen Europeans left, who had absconded, apparently from fear that they might share the fate of the other four. In 1799, there were no less than forty-four non-official Europeans in the district. The most important was, of course, the famous M. De Champigny, but numerically the strongest community were the Greeks, no less than thirty-one of whom were engaged in selling salt. They were altogether a distinctly cosmopolitan crew, which, in addition to the Greeks, included three Frenchmen, one Deluc, whose nationality is not specified but who presumably was not English, and a Dutchman who is described as very old and dumb. One cannot help wondering what an old and speechless Dutchman could have been doing in Sylhet a century ago.

In the early days of our administration the revenue of the district was paid in cowries.

The Currency. As Mr. Lindsay says, it is difficult to understand how they became the circulating medium of a country three hundred miles distant from the

sea. The only explanation he could offer was that the people were so poor, and their rents so small, that a currency of extremely low value was required. The rate of exchange varied at different times, but, in Mr. Lindsay's day, four *kahans* or 5,120 cowries went to a rupee, and, as the revenue amounted to Rs. 2,50,000, the Collector had to receive nearly 1,300 millions of these little shells. The inconvenience of such a currency was indescribable. The cowries were generally received in baskets, and when they changed hands, the baskets were divided into groups of ten. The payee then counted one basket in each group, and, whatever deficiency was found in that basket, was supposed to run through the remaining nine. They were not received by weight, as the addition of a little sand would at once have turned the scale, nor by measure, as a little shaking made them settle down. They were fragile, and the Government of Bengal found it necessary to import shells, at a cost of more than a lakh of rupees per annum, to replace those lost and broken in the Presidency.* They were cumbersome to receive, and troublesome alike to store in Sylhet, or to export to Dacca. Efforts were accordingly made by Government to induce the landholders to pay their revenue in rupees, and by 1819, two-thirds of the people had agreed to do so, and only 30,000 *kahans* of cowries were in store. This result was not attained without much difficulty. The price of cowries was raised by declining to issue them from the treasury, and at one time the Collector had nearly 1,100 millions of

* Letter No. 164 A., dated 9th September 1819, from the Board of Revenue to the Collector. The Collectors of Customs at the three seaports reported that 43,000 maunds of cowries were imported every year.

these little shells in the godowns at Sylhet. Arrangements were made to send them to other districts, to distribute them as diet money to prisoners, and to sell them locally ; and gradually this medium of circulation, which assuredly must have been one of the very worst on earth, was banished from the district.

It is interesting to trace the development of the **Development of the excise system.** excise revenue in the early days of British rule, and the small beginnings from which the present system was built up. The consumption of spirituous liquor was naturally regarded with some disfavour by the Muhammadans, a tax of 5 *kahans* or about two rupees, was imposed on each maund landed at Sylhet, and each retail vendor paid a small registration fee of Re. 1 per annum.* For some years after our assumption of the administration no attempt seems to have been made to obtain any revenue from excise, ; but in 1793 the Collector, under pressure from the Board of Revenue, issued licenses to four distillers. The fees received only amounted to Rs. 42, whether per mensem or per annum is not quite clear ; but the actual incidence of the fees was not of much importance, as shortly after receiving their licenses, all the vendors disappeared. Further enquiries led the Collector to report that liquor was only drunk by the fishermen near Ajmiriganj ; but in 1798, he complained bitterly of the evil effects of opium. This, he said, was in very common use, or rather abuse, as the consumption of the drug gave rise to consequences of the most disastrous kind. "Opium if taken to excess, which commonly is the case, brings on an insanity which in general terminates either

* Collector's letter No. 204, dated 3rd April 1795.

in suicide or murder. Instances of such fatal effects are so numerous and so well authenticated by the records of the Fauzdari Court, as to have attracted the particular attention of the Magistrate." * Bhang and ganja were not generally used except by natives who had come from Hindustan. It is, however, doubtful whether the opium habit was as prevalent as the Collector thought. In 1814, the total amount of 'koppah' used in the district was said to be some 60 maunds, but, as 'koppah' consists of strips of cloth soaked with poppy juice, the actual weight of the drug was only 40 maunds, which certainly was not a very large amount. 'Koppah' sold for Rs. 6 per seer in Sylhet, and Rs. 4 in the mofussil. The lack of definite knowledge on the subject is well illustrated by the fact that, three years later, the Collector said that only one-third of 'koppah' was actually opium, and that it sold from Rs. 6 to Rs. 10 per seer. It was subsequently proposed to charge a fee of Rs. 6 per annum for each license for the retail sale of ganja, Rs. 12 for opium, and Rs. 18 for "muddad," presumably madak. Two country spirit shops were settled at a rental of Rs. 17-4 per mensem, a fee that is in marked contrast with that now paid for the Sylhet shop which, in 1904, amounted to Rs. 738 per mensem. Other shops outside the town paid from one-half to one-sixth of this very moderate demand. Even these small fees were found to be prohibitive in their effect, and in 1800, not a single license for the preparation and vend of spiritous liquors was taken out. In 1808, the Collector raised the license fee to As. 8 a day. This proposal found no favour with the Magistrate, who thought that, in view

* Collector's letter No. 216, dated 3rd June 1798.

of the large illicit trade in drugs and liquor, the fee should be within the reach of the poorest purse, and should not exceed As. 2 per diem. In 1813, the Collector estimated that one-half, or at the lowest calculation one-third of the population of Sylhet town, which, by the way, he calculated to be no less than 30,000 souls, drank spirituous liquor, and complained of the facility with which illicit distillation could be carried on. Two years later the practice was inaugurated of issuing Government opium from the Treasury. The price charged was Rs. 25 a seer, and the amount sold in the first two years was less than two seers. The price was then lowered to Rs. 20, and afterwards to Rs. 10, and a daily tax was imposed upon the vendor. This concession, coupled with a stern repression of the illicit opium traffic, sent up the issues in 1821-22 to over 24 maunds. Sylhet, however, has never been a great opium-eating district, and in 1904, only 16 maunds were issued from the Treasury.

It is sometimes thought that the salary of a Collector in the early days of British rule was small ; and that, though there are now fifteen rupees to the sovereign instead of eight, as in Mr. Lindsay's day, the fall in exchange and the withdrawal of the right of trade have been fully counter-balanced by an increase in the scale of pay. This does not seem, however, to have been the case. Mr. Lindsay's salary was fixed at Rs. 1,500 per mensem in 1787, and he was further granted a house allowance of Rs. 150 per mensem.* Whether he travelled by water or by land he drew a travelling allowance of Re. 1-1 per mile, as com-

* Letter No. 70A., dated 12th April 1787, from the Assistant Secretary to the Governor-General.

pared with the four annas and eight annas of the present day, though boat and cooly hire must have been much lower a hundred years ago than they are now. Mr. Lodge's travelling allowance bill for the journey from Calcutta to Sylhet in 1794 was no less than Rs. 1,061.* Again in 1825, the Collector was allowed an aggregate salary of Rs. 2,510 per mensem, a larger sum than is drawn by any Collector at the present day.

But, if the salaries a hundred years ago were far from small, the expenditure on public works was very light. The *Public offices.* catcherry itself was a very modest building. Mr. Ahmuty, at the end of the eighteenth century, reported that he had erected "a *pucka* godown divided into three apartments wherein the public records of my office have been ever since deposited; independent of which I rent two bungalows, one of which is occupied by the mohurrirs and writers, and the other appropriated to the use of my public catcherry." The Governor-General desired that a suitable building should be provided for the Collector's office. That officer replied that if a proper building was to be constructed it must be at least equal in size to a common dwelling-house, and contain four commodious rooms with verandahs on the north and south. The cost of such an office if made of the best materials would not be less than Rs. 10,000. The office erected for the Deputy Commissioner, after the earthquake of 1897, had a floor space of 35,000 square feet

* Collector's letter, dated 5th March 1794. The distance from Calcutta to Sylhet was said to be 998 miles, and mileage drawn accordingly. The Accounts Department at the present day hold that the distance *via* the Sundarbans is only 709 miles. It does not appear whether the same rates were allowed for journeys in the district.

including the verandahs, and though built after a plan in which economy is carried to the very verge of meanness, cost Rs. 1,68,000. The estimate sanctioned for the construction of a jail at Sylhet in 1788 amounted to Rs. 2,500, and affords a striking contrast to the Rs. 1,66,000, which have lately been expended on the existing institution. The godowns in which the myriads of cowry shells were stored were erected by the Collector at his own expense, and leased by him to Government. Mr. Lindsay says that they cost him Rs. 8,000, and he charged a rent of Rs. 100 per mensem, which for those days seems moderate enough.

One of the most serious disabilities under which the people of Sylhet labour at the present day is the want of proper treatment when they succumb to the unsanitary conditions in which their lives are passed, but the Medical Department has fortunately made some advance since the days of Mughal rule. In 1789, Mr. Willes complained that one Mohammad Jaffar was acting as medical adviser to the Nawab at Dacca, in spite of the fact that he held a grant of land worth Rs. 900 per annum, which had been given to his predecessors by the Mughal Government in consideration of their undertaking the duties now assigned to the civil surgeon of Sylhet. Mr. Willes requested that this gentleman might be sent back to the district to which he properly belonged, as the people were in great distress from want of either a Muhammadan or Bengali doctor. The unfortunate civil surgeon was expected to devote fully half of his annual grant to the purchase of medicines; but it is to be presumed that he was allowed to add by private

A Civil Surgeon of the 18th century.

practice to the modest stipend he received from Government.

In the *Friend of India* of February 9th, 1837, the following gloomy account is given of the condition of the district. The writer seems to infer misery and deterioration from the fact that the revenue is not easily collected; but the difficulty experienced in realizing the very small Government demand, a difficulty which is experienced now as then, is due to other causes :—

Sylhet in 1837.

“ In the sitting of the Board of Revenue on the 30th of January last, the present state of the district of Sylhet was brought under consideration. That district during the last forty years has been subject to a gradual deterioration; and has at length, reached that point of wretchedness which naturally produces a reaction. Forty years ago, it was, comparatively speaking, in a flourishing state; now it is a complete pauper warren. In the whole district there are not fifteen landed proprietors possessed of Rs. 5,000 and the condition of the great bulk of zamindars is in the last degree wretched. But it is of late years that the deterioration has taken the most rapid strides. In 1821, the district was in so prosperous a state, that a sale of land for arrears of revenue hardly ever took place. Even as late 1829, there were but sixty-three estates sold by the Collector; in 1834, the number of estates sold rose to about 250; the next year, the number was doubled; and in the past year, it had reached the extent of 1,004. At the close of the last accounts, it was found, that though the assessment of the entire district did not much exceed three lakhs of rupees, two lakhs of this sum remained unpaid, and that it became necessary to advertise 26,250 tenures for sale. But what is to restore comfort and security to the vast population whose sole dependance is on the food raised in a district, in which every estate, with the exception of a small fraction, is put up to sale? To complete the misery of the district, these sales, it appears, are attended by a set of speculators, who bid for the forfeited estates, though not themselves possessing more than the amount of the deposit money; and whose hope of gain in this lottery of desolation, is built on their being able to sell their purchase to advantage, before the settling day arrives.”

Sylhet did not escape unscathed from the troubles of 1857. In December a party of the
1857. Chittagong mutineers entered the south of the district, with the evident intention of pushing on through the Surma Valley to Manipur. A detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry, under their Commanding Officer, the Hon'ble Major Byng, started to Pratapgarh to intercept them, but on arriving there learnt that they had changed the direction of their march, and were then in the neighbourhood of Latu. The troops immediately started for that place, and on reaching it had barely time to form, when the mutineers came into sight, advancing in good order. A smart action took place, and the enemy, though undoubtedly superior in numbers, broke and fled, leaving 26 dead upon the field. Our own loss was small, and consisted of five dead and one severely wounded, but Major Byng was unfortunately amongst the killed. It was impossible to follow up the mutineers with any hope of success through the jungle covered hills into which they had fled. Detachments of men were, however, posted so as to intercept their march towards Manipur, and a native officer, who had been sent with sixteen men to attack ten of the enemy who were lurking in the jungle near Latu, succeeded in killing eight of them. On the 23rd of December the mutineers entered Cachar ; but the pursuit was still maintained, and they were engaged and defeated on December 23rd, January 12th, January 22nd and January 26th. They were now completely disorganized and dispirited. They were destitute of all supplies, and some were found lying in the jungle, having died of actual starvation, while others were despatched by Kuki scouts, who had been offered a reward for every sepoy killed. It

is believed that out of the three companies which left Chittagong not three or four men escaped death or capture.

The district is not rich in archæological remains of interest. Mosques are numerous, especially in North Sylhet, but most of them are still used as places of worship, and are described in the following chapter. Two miles north-east of the Patharkandi police station there are the remains of the Fort of Raja Pratap Sing, a petty local notable who has given his name to the Pratapgarh pargana. Reference has been already made to the ruins in South Sylhet associated with the names of Subid Narayan and Khowaj Osman, and in pargana Bhanugach in the same locality there is a fort attributed to Chandra Singh. This man belonged to the family of the Tippera Rajas and is said to have moved from the hills into the Sylhet plains about the seventh century, A. D.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Density—Towns and villages—Growth of population—Migration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste—Brahmans—Sudras—Caste distribution—Muhammadanism—Mosques and tombs—Hinduism—The Shahaj Bhajan—Sacred places—Akhras—Christianity—Occupations—Leading families—Marriage customs—Hindu festivals—Amusements.

Sylhet covers an area of 5,435 square miles, and, though there are parts of it which would not generally be considered desirable places of habitation, it supports a much larger population than any other district in Assam. In 1901, the density was 412 to the square mile. This was greatly in excess of the figure for the Province as a whole (109), though considerably below that of the two Bengal districts which adjoin Sylhet on the west : Mymensingh, where there was a density of 618 persons to the square mile, and Tippera, where the density was as high as 848. The statement in the margin shows the density by subdivisions. In the northern part of Sylhet, the floods of rain that are precipitated on the southern face of the Assam range, and the heavy local fall convert the plain into a swamp at certain seasons of the year. In the centre of the great depressions, or basins, with which

	Density of Population.	No. of persons per square mile.
Sonnaganj ..		391
North Sylhet ..		489
Karimganj ..		392
South Sylhet ..		461
Habiganj ..		556

this locality abounds, the cultivation of hot weather crops is quite impossible, and there is no high land available for village sites. The Dharmapasha thana has a density of only 246, over a total area of 321 square miles, while in the Sunamganj thana, which adjoins it on the east, there are only 262 persons to the square mile. In the Jaintia Parganas which, roughly speaking, are enclosed within the Surma river, the Piyaingong, and the Jaintia Hills, the density (250) is slightly less. Towards the centre of the district population increases, and in the Balaganj thana, over a total area of 222 square miles, there is an average density of 640 people to the square mile. The whole of the Habiganj subdivision is very fully peopled, the density ranging from 493 in the Baniyachung thana to 651 in the Madhabpur thana in the south-west corner of the district. Population is also fairly dense in South Sylhet, as the low ranges of hills, which are unfit for the growth of ordinary crops, have been to a great extent cleared and planted out with tea. In Karimganj population begins to fall off, as a large proportion of the surface is covered with the Chhatachura, Pratapgarh, and Pathariya hills ; and the upper valleys of the Langai and Singla have not yet been opened out for cultivation. Taking the thana as a unit, it cannot be said that any portion of the district is sparsely peopled, as nowhere is the density less than 246 to the square mile. Population is, however, comparatively sparse in the belt of land lying at the foot of the hills along the northern frontier, is somewhat denser on the eastern frontier, and is positively congested in the central and south-western portions of the district. The density in each thana in 1901 will be found in Table II.

Sylhet contains five small towns and 8,330 villages.

Towns and villages.

Town.	Population 1901.
Sylhet ..	13,893
Karimganj ..	5,692
Habiganj ..	5,736
Sunamganj ..	2,520
Maulavi Basar ..	2,481

The population of these towns at the census of 1901 is shewn in the statement in the margin. Seven-eighths of the villages are reported to be small hamlets with less than 500

inhabitants, and there were only 54 with a population ranging from two to five thousand souls. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these figures. The villages are not, as in some Provinces of India, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees, in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. Except in the flooded tracts, it is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. It is thus difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields, and the village as a statistical unit is of little value.

The earliest estimate of the population is one made by Mr. John Willes in 1789. He reported that there were altogether 492,945 people in the district; but his figures were evidently very much below the mark, and in 1813 the Collector made a much more reasonable estimate of 1,500,000 persons. In 1853, Mr. Mills calculated that the

population was about 1,393,500, this figure being apparently obtained by multiplying by five the number of houses reported by the police. This estimate was much more plausible than one framed by the Survey Department in 1860, which only amounted to 795,272 souls. In 1866, the Collector stated that, including the Jaintia Parganas, the whole population of the district might be fairly estimated at 1,000,000, or half a million less than the guess made by his predecessor 50 years before. The census taken a few years later in 1872 showed that his estimate was ridiculously low.

The statement in the margin shows the population recorded at each of the four last enumerations, with the percentage increase occurring in each decade. Part of the increase disclosed in 1881 was, no doubt, due to the inaccuracy of the enumeration of 1872. In the next decade there was a fair expansion of the population, but much of this was due to immigration; and the natural growth, *i.e.*, the increase in the number of persons born and censused in the district, only amounted to 5·8 per cent. in the ten years. In South Sylhet, where there was a great development of the tea industry, the gross increase amounted to as much as 16 per cent., and in Karimganj, where similar causes were in operation, there was an increase of 12 per cent. In Habiganj, on the other hand, the increase was less than 6 per cent. During the next decennial period the gross increase amounted to 4 per cent. This in itself is small enough, but more than half of this was due to immigration, and the number of persons born and censused in the district

	Population.	Percent- age variation.
1872 ..	1,719,539	
1881 ..	1,969,009	+ 14·5
1891 ..	2,154,593	+ 9·4
1901 ..	2,241,848	+ 4·0

only increased by 1·9 per cent. The local variation in the population is thus described in the Report on the census of Assam in 1901.* “From the statement in the margin it appears that, while in one subdivision there has been an increase of nearly 10 per cent., in another there has been a decrease of nearly 4.

Distribution of population by Subdivisions.

SUBDIVISION.	Popu- lation 1901.	PERCENTAGE VARIATION.	
		1891— 1901.	1881— 1891.
Sunamganj ..	433,752	+ 4·9	+ 8·0
North Sylhet ..	463,477	— 8·9	+ 7·9
Karimganj ..	410,460	+ 6·7	+12·0
South Sylhet ..	379,168	+ 2·5	+16·3
Habiganj ..	555,001	+ 9·9	+ 5·5

Habiganj has increased by 9·9 per cent., and, though there has been a substantial increase in the number of persons censused on tea gardens, the general population has increased by 7·3 per cent. In Sunamganj also there has been a very fair natural growth of the population, the increase amounting to nearly 5 per cent.; and as this cannot be considered a particularly healthy portion of the district, lying, as it does, at the foot of the Khasi Hills, there is no need to be dissatisfied with the progress made during the decade. The same cannot, however, be said of Karimganj, for, though the increase in the total population amounts to 6·7 per cent., the greater part of this is due to the tea industry, persons censused outside tea gardens having only increased by 2·5 per cent. In South Sylhet, the state of affairs is still more unsatisfactory, as the population outside tea gardens has actually decreased by 3·9 per cent. during the last ten years, owing to the ravages of malarial fever; while in North Sylhet the total population is less by 3·9 per cent. than it was ten years ago.” The decrease in the sadr subdivision was ascribed to a wave of malarial fever, which

* Page 15.

was unusually virulent in 1897 and 1898, and there can be little doubt that, in the middle of the nineties, Sylhet, like most of the other districts in Assam, was suffering from abnormally unfavourable conditions.

Sylhet is one of the most important tea districts in the Province, and during the ten years ending with 1900 over 141,000 coolies were imported to its gardens. But the indigenous population is so large that, at the last census, foreigners, *i.e.*, persons born outside the Province, formed only a little more than 7 per cent. of the total population. This proportion is unusually low for Assam. In the Province as a whole, foreigners formed nearly 13 per cent. of the persons censused there in 1901; and in the four other districts in which the tea industry is of considerable importance, *i.e.*, Cachar, Darrang, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, the rates varied from 24 to 41 per cent. The distribution varies considerably by subdivisions. In South Sylhet foreigners formed 16 per cent., and in Karimganj 10 per cent. of the total population; whereas in Sunamganj they were only 4 and in North Sylhet 3 per cent. of the persons censused within the subdivisinal boundaries.

The total number of foreign immigrants was 164,895, but a considerable proportion of these persons were not

Immigrants from Mymensingh ..	16,389
Hill Tippera and Tippera ..	11,690
Dacca	5,428
Total ..	<u>33,407</u>

members of the cooly castes.

The statement in the margin shows that over 32,000 persons had entered Sylhet from

Hill Tippera and the three neighbouring districts of Bengal. No less than 30,000 of these people were

found in the frontier subdivisions of Sunamganj and Habiganj, so that it is not unreasonable to suppose that most of them had only moved across the border—a few miles from their former homes, and thus belonged to a quite different category from that in which the garden cooly must be placed. Sylhet, however, gains nothing by this movement of the population, as the number of persons who were born in Assam, in this case practically Sylhet, and were censused in the four adjoining districts

Emigrants from Assam to Hill			
Tippera	..	..	16,106
Tippera	..	..	8,067
Mymensingh	..	..	9,890
Dacca	..	..	2,340
Total			36,393

of Bengal, was over 36,000.

Nearly half of these people were found in the neighbouring state of Hill Tippera.

There is plenty of waste land still available here, which the authorities are willing to lease out on easy terms, and which forms a great attraction to the inhabitants of the densely populated subdivision of Habiganj. There is a good deal of inter-marriage between Sylhet and Tippera and Mymensingh, and, as there are no natural frontiers, it is only to be expected that there should be a certain amount of movement across the boundary of the Province. The majority of these people go to Bengal as servants, cooks, priests, and shopkeepers, as the pressure on the soil is as severe there as in their native district.

Turning to the Provinces and divisions from which the coolies come, it appears that the proportion of immigrants from Chota Nagpur (24,627) is comparatively low. This is due to the fact that natives of the United Provinces thrive better in the Surma Valley than in Assam Proper, and are employed by planters in place of the true jungly cooly who is difficult and expensive

to procure. Three-fourths of these Chota Nagpuris were found in the two subdivisions of South Sylhet and Habiganj. 51,068 natives of the United Provinces were censused in the district, most of whom come from Ghazipur and Azamgarh. Nearly one half of these coolies were living in the Karimganj subdivision, and most of the remainder in South Sylhet. 13,144 persons came from the Central Provinces, chiefly from the districts of Bilaspur and Jabalpur; and over 10,000 from Madras. Unlike the Assam Valley, the number of settlers from Nepal is very small.

Sylhet, as is only natural, loses largely by inter-district migration. Most of this takes place with the neighbouring district of the Cachar Plains, to which Sylhet sent 25,971 persons in 1901, though it received only 4,111 in return. This does not, of course, represent the loss to Sylhet in the single decade 1891—1901. Cachar itself is now fairly densely peopled, and most of these Sylhettis moved into it some years ago. The actual increase at the last census over the figures for 1891 was only 2,259; but, to provide for this increase, and to make good deficiencies caused by death, must have required the emigration of about 8,500 persons from Sylhet to Cachar between 1891 and 1901. It need hardly be said that the district can easily afford to spare these men. In places there is considerable pressure on the soil, and it is hoped that now that the railway has been completed through the North Cachar Hills, some of its teeming thousands may pass across into the fertile plains of the Assam Valley. Details with regard to the proportion of immigrants in each subdivision will be found in Table IV.

The proportion of women in 1901 was fairly high, (964 to 1,000 men) and considerably exceeded the proportion for the Province as a whole. This was, however, largely due to the emigration of men in considerable numbers to Cachar, and to the fact that the proportion of the sexes was not, as in the other tea districts, seriously affected by immigration. If these two factors are eliminated, and the proportion calculated on the natural population, *i.e.*, those born in the district and censused in the Province, it will be found that there were, in 1901, only 958 women to every thousand men, a figure which was 4 below the average for the plains districts as a whole. The ratio between the sexes has shown little tendency to change, and, taking those born and censused in the district, the proportion of women was practically identical at the three last enumerations. Few things are more obscure than the causes which determine the proportion of the sexes, but one factor which is known to operate adversely on female life, *i.e.*, infant marriage, is unfortunately in existence in Sylhet.

The statement in the margin shows the percentage of Hindu girls under ten, and between ten and fifteen, who have performed the marriage ceremony ; and the proportion of Hindu girls between fifteen and twenty who are still unwed. Similar figures are given for Muhammadans, and for the Hindus of Nowgong, who are fortunately free from the ideas that in Bengal "have

Percentage married and widowed amongst girls aged.		Percentage unmarried amongst girls aged.
0-10	10-15	15-20
Nowgong } 0.3	10.5	40.1
Hindus }		
Sylhet } 3.4	57.7	5.2
Hindus }		
Sylhet } 1.0	37.6	7.2
Muham- madans. }		

succeeded, without a shadow of textual authority, in bringing about the monstrous abuse that the girls of the upper classes commence married life at the age of nine years, and become mothers at the very earliest time that it is possible for them to do so."* The contrast between the figures is very striking. In an equal number of little Hindu girls under ten, there are 17 who have performed the marriage ceremony in Sylhet, for every one who has been hurried into matrimony in Nowgong, and the contrast at the next age period is almost equally pronounced. Over 15 the number of unmarried maidens in Sylhet is very small, and many of them, probably, suffer from some physical disqualification which seriously affects their chances in the marriage market. The effect of contact is also clearly shown. The Muhammadans have, to a great extent, adopted the fashions of their Hindu neighbours, in spite of the obvious disadvantages of union with a little girl, instead of with a full grown young woman ; disadvantages which are not minimised in their case by any foolish dictates of tradition.

The future of the district can to some extent be judged by the proportion borne by the reproductive element, which in this case may be fairly taken as married women between the ages of 15 and 40, to the total population. Out of every thousand persons censused in Sylhet in 1901, 161 were potential mothers, a proportion which was slightly higher than that prevailing in the Province as a whole (157). As compared with the Central Provinces and Bengal the district is, however, handicapped in the race for population, as in the former

* Report on the Census of India in 1901, p. 433.

Province there were 169, in the latter 165 potential mothers per mille in 1901.

The abstract in the margin shows, out of 10,000 males, the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for record at the census of 1901. The figures for males only have been given, as concealment is more likely to occur in the case of women, and in their case the figures for leprosy seem undoubtedly to be incorrect. The number of persons afflicted with this terrible disease is unusually large, and an asylum has been opened at Sylhet for the reception of pauper lepers. The total number of males suffering from this disease in 1901 was 1,728. The number of leprous women was in all probability, not much smaller, though the number actually returned was only 422. Deaf-mutism and blindness are also fairly prevalent.

Bengali is the ordinary language of the district and was returned by 92 per cent. of the inhabitants, Hindi by nearly 5 per cent., and Manipuri by $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. Tipura is spoken on the southern frontier, and the various cooly languages have their own adherents. In Table III details are given for the principal languages by subdivisions. According to Dr. Grierson, the language spoken by the inhabitants of Eastern Sylhet is not intelligible to the natives of Central or Northern Bengal.* There are several peculiarities of pronunciation. K has a guttural

Infirmities.			
	Sylhet.	Assam.	India.
Insane ..	4	5	3
Deaf mute ..	8	9	6
Blind ..	11	10	12
Lepers ..	15	12	6

* Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. V., Pt. I, p. 224.

sound like the German *ch*., *ch*. is pronounced like *s*, and there is no difference between *ch*. and *chh*. The sibilant, as in the case of Assamese, is often replaced by *h*, and the Sylhetti speaks of *haph* when referring to a snake, and talks of *hakal* instead of *sakal*. But, like a veritable cockney, he is not content with inserting *h*'s where they are not wanted, but frequently omits them when they are. The elephant masquerades as *ati*, and *hatgao*, which really should be *satgao*, is loosely spoken of as *atgao*. The *h* is also reduced almost to the vanishing point in *ghar*, *bhari*, or in verbs like *kahilam*. The Devanagari character is used amongst low caste Muhammadans, especially in the east of the district. They find it easier to master than Bengali, and Bengali books are printed in this character for their benefit.

The caste system of Sylhet is based on the principles in force in Eastern Bengal, a tract of country of which it really forms a part; but as is only natural in a frontier district, social restrictions are to some extent relaxed. Baidyas and Kayasthas intermarry, and Kayastha girls are not unfrequently given to men of lower rank. In these cases, the bride, of course, sinks to the status of her husband, but her parents do not lose their caste on account of the misalliance. The Shahas, who are the great trading caste of Sylhet, and have amassed considerable wealth, occupy a good position in society, though Brahmans will not actually take water from their hands; but even this privilege is accorded to the Das who are the great cultivating caste of the district. This concession is not extended to the Das's priest; and though a Kayastha or Baidya will

take water brought him by a Das, and a high caste Brahman will allow him to enter his cook house, the Das's priest could not offer a cup of water even to a member of the Nabasakh without receiving a severe rebuff. Sylhet and Cachar are, by the way, the only districts in Assam in which the Nabasakh are found, *i.e.*, the functional castes, by tradition nine in number, from whose hands a Brahman can take water. In Sylhet they include the Baniya, Barui, Gandhabanik, Goala, Kamar, Kumhar, Mayara, Napit, Tanti, and Teli. The typical castes of the district hardly call for special mention. They do not differ from those of Eastern Bengal, and are described at length in Mr. Risley's work on the Tribes and Castes of Bengal. Brief notes on all the castes censused in Assam will also be found in the Report on the census of that Province in 1901.

Some reference should, however, be made to the Brahmins on account of their high rank, and to the Sudras who occupy a somewhat peculiar position in Sylhet. The five Brahmins who were imported by the Raja of Tippera in 642 A. D. are said to have been the first members of that caste who settled in the district. The original immigrants were Vaidiks, but representatives of the Rarhi and Barendra septs are also found. They have, however, been so thoroughly fused by intermarriage, that, in practice, there is hardly any difference between these three divisions. Two valid distinctions exist between the Sampradayiks and the non-Sampradayiks, and between the Gaur Gobindi and other Brahmins. The origin of these Gaur Gobindi Brahmins is obscure, and they

endeavour to merge their identity in that of the whole Brahman caste. Gaur Gobind, the last Hindu king of Sylhet, is said to have raised the position of the Maharas and Dases, and general opinion would suggest that the Brahmans who bear his name are indebted to his kind offices for their high position. The most respectable classes of Brahmans are known as Sampradayiks, and do not often marry outside their own community. They are again sub-divided into four local sections: the eastern, who are the most honourable of all and live in the east of the South Sylhet subdivision, the central, southern, and northern. The customs of the Sylhetti Brahmans do not materially differ from those followed in Bengal, which are described at length in Mr. Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. They observe the rules of the *gotra*,* and the usual restrictions which encompass a member of the priestly caste from the day of his birth to the day when he is laid upon the funeral pyre. Brahmans are distributed fairly evenly all over the district but are not very numerous in Sunamganj.

The term Sudra is usually applied to the lowest of the four great divisions of Manu, of which the other three are the Brahmans, Kshattriyas, and Vaisyas, but in Sylhet it has acquired a special meaning. Here it is used of the "Deba Das," the low caste people who are known as "Singhas" and "Bhandaris," and act as servants to Brahmans, Kayasthas, and Baidyas. They

* The following are the principal *gotras* in Sylhet: Sandilya, Bharadhwaja, Kasyapa, Savarna, Ghritakausika, Moudgalya, Parasara, Bateya, Basistha, Jamadagnya, Gautama, Agnibeshma, Krishnatreya, Kusika, Kousika, Katyayana, Saktri, Gargya, Atreya, Gargya Maharehi, Swarna-kousika, Jatukarna and Batsa.

are often allowed to occupy their land rent free, and in return for this are bound to render their masters any assistance that may be necessary. Separate figures have not been given for the Sudras in Table IV. as the Halwa Das dislike the prefix Halwa, and, in 1901, many of them described themselves as Sudra Das or even Sudra. Another curious caste are the Rarh or Kusiari. Their second name is said to be derived either from the Kusiara river, or from the sugarcane *kushiyar* which they grow. But neither of these derivations seem appropriate, as they would apply with equal force to thousands of other people. Another tradition says that they are of Tippera or Bodo descent. Kusiari are cultivators by profession, they are looked down on by the Halwa Das, and numerically they are unimportant. The Haijongs, who are found in the Sunamganj subdivision, seem to have originally come from the Garo Hills. They speak a peculiar dialect of their own, and are, apparently, the result of a union between Garos and low caste people of the plains.

The number of persons returned under each of the main castes in 1901 will be found in Table IV, and it only remains to touch briefly on their local distribution. Kayasthas are specially numerous in Habiganj and North Sylhet, and are comparatively scarce in Karimganj. The Das are found in strong force all over the district, but are particularly numerous in Sunamganj, where they form nearly one-third of the total Hindu population ; a proportion about twice as large as that existing in any other subdivision. The Baruis are specially numerous in South Sylhet, where their

pan gardens are to be seen on the banks of the rivers. Habiganj and Sunamganj are the strongholds of the Shahas and Kaibarttas. The latter are hardly found in the three remaining subdivisions, their place being taken by Dom Patnis who are especially numerous in Karimganj. Most of the Manipuris are settled in Karimganj and South Sylhet, though in the latter subdivision they masquerade under the name of Khattris or Kshattriyas. The language test is, under these circumstances, the most reliable, and this shows that in 1901, nearly 29,000 persons were speakers of Manipuri. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that at the present day there is any appreciable immigration from Manipur. This movement westward took place some years ago. Each succeeding census shows a large decrease in the number of persons born in Manipur and censused in Sylhet, and in 1901 there were only 89.* These Manipuris are a factor with whom the district officer has to reckon. The history of their own State is one of perpetual conflict; wars and rumours of wars, risings and rebellions, usurpers seizing the throne and being in their turns assailed by other usurpers. The Manipuris are by nature a turbulent and unruly people, and have little respect for the majesty of the law. In 1857, it was thought that possibly they might give trouble, and recently at Bhanubil they have evinced a tendency to defy not only their own landlord but the representatives of Government itself. They are also suspected of having an inclination for dacoity and other violent forms of crime.

* The corresponding figures for 1881 were 3,253 and for 1891, 336.

The abstract in the margin gives some idea of the ethnical composition of the people. The Muhammadans describe themselves as Sheikhs, but the great majority are no doubt descended from the aboriginal inhabitants of the Surma Valley, and must have been largely recruited from the humble Hindu castes, who themselves were very probably of Bodo origin. Both the Naba-

Ethnical composition of the peoples.		Percentage on total district population.
Muhammadans ..	..	53
Higher Hindu Castes (Brahmans, Bhats, Baldyas and Kayasthas) ..	..	5
The Nabasakh ..	..	5
Respectable Cultivating Castes (Sudra, Sodra Das, Halwa Das, Das) ..	..	7
Lower functional Castes (Shaha, Sunri, Jugi, Dholis, Butradhar) ..	..	6
Fishing Castes (Kalbaritta, Dom Patni, Namasudra, Bhulmalia, Mali) ..	..	13
Manipuris ..	..	1
Animistic Tribes (Tipperas Garos, Khasis, Jaijongs) ..	..	1
Other Persons ..	..	9
Total ..	..	100

sakh and the lower functional castes have to a great extent abandoned their traditional occupations for agriculture. The fishing castes are very strongly represented, but this is only natural in so watery a district. The bulk of the undistributed nine per cent. are foreigners of various humble castes employed on tea gardens.

Classified by religion, the population of Sylhet in 1901 was distributed in the following proportions : Muhammadans 52·7 per cent., Hindus 46·8 per cent., Animists 0·5 per cent. The abstract in the margin shows the percentage of the population in each subdivision who profess the faith of Islam. As is only natural, Muhammadans are most numerous in North Sylhet, which was the first portion of the district to come into their possession, and on the western frontier which adjoins Bengal. South Sylhet and Karimganj came less under the influence of the Moslem faith, and for

Religion—Muhammadanism.		Percentage of Muhammadans to total population.
North Sylhet ..	..	67
Sunamganj ..	..	55
Habiganj ..	..	53
Karimganj ..	..	47
South Sylhet ..	..	39

the faith of Islam. As is only natural, Muhammadans are most numerous in North Sylhet, which was the first portion of the district to come into their possession, and on the western frontier which adjoins Bengal. South Sylhet and Karimganj came less under the influence of the Moslem faith, and for

many years were probably dominated to some extent by the Hindu Kingdom of Tippera.

During the last decade the increase amongst the Muhammadans amounted to 5 per cent, though the natural growth of the population was less than 2 per cent. This is the more remarkable in that nowhere are the Muhammadans more numerous than in North Sylhet, a subdivision in which the last census disclosed a serious decrease in the population. Four Musalman gentlemen, who were consulted by the Deputy Commissioner, were all of opinion that conversion had very little to do with the growth of the Muhammadan population. There is no organised propaganda of the faith, and the few converts made are said to be Hindus of low-caste, who have been detected in intrigues with Muhammadans of the opposite sex. The higher rate of increase amongst the Musalmans is ascribed to superior fecundity, which is said to be due to greater physical vigour and a more nourishing dietary, to the absence of restrictions on widow remarriage, to a less marked disparity between the ages of husband and wife, and, to some extent, to the greater prevalence of polygamy. The absence of restrictions on widow remarriage is probably the most important factor. In 1901, there were only 31,000 Muhammadan widows between 15 and 40, as compared with 60,000 Hindu widows of this age, and the Musalmans had about 30,000 more potential mothers, *i. e.*, married women between 15 and 40, than the followers of the rival religion. A difference such as this is bound to produce a sensible effect on the growth of the population.

The town of Sylhet is full of memorials of its Muhammadan conquerors. On every side are to be seen mosques, the majority of which are still in excellent repair, and are attended by a concourse of devout worshippers. But, even more numerous than the mosques, are the large brick tombs of the Muhammadan saints, each with a little masonry receptacle for a native lamp, or else with a bamboo lamp post of the most modern pattern, standing at its side. These tombs are to be seen in every quarter of the town. There is hardly a road which has not one or more along it, hardly a hill which has not the bones of saints upon its summit. The religious centre of Sylhet is the shrine of the famous Shah Jalal. It is situated about a mile north of the cutcherry, some three or four hundred yards west of the road that leads to Companyganj. At the point where the main and branch roads meet are the masonry walls of an old mosque, begun some two and a half centuries ago, but still unfinished. The builder was dilatory, the work was not completed within the stated time, and, as a punishment for his neglect, the Nawab of that day had him summarily put to death. The building is now almost completely hidden by the trees that have succeeded in effecting a lodgment in its walls, but, though the roof was never finished, the massive outer walls suffered little or no damage in the great earthquake of 1897.

Shah Jalal's mosque, which was built in 1531 A. D., is approached through a gateway of solid masonry, much of which was shaken down in 1897, and now lies in huge blocks in picturesque confusion on the ground. On the

left hand side as you enter is a tank with a ruined mosque in front. On the right is an open shed, in which food is cooked for the worshippers on holy days, one huge cauldron alone containing as much as six and a half hundred-weight of rice. The building is approached by a flight of steps which terminates in a broad platform. In front is a central hall through which the worshipper passes to the actual tomb. Here there is a small place of prayer, which, together with the gateway, is said to have been erected by Mr. John Willes, one of the earliest of the Collectors of Sylhet. South of the central hall is the mosque in which prayers are usually held, while at the back is a deep well full of fish who come when called to be fed. A grant of Rs. 93 per mensem, which was sanctioned by the Nawabs for the maintenance of this institution, has been confirmed by the British Government. Another famous mosque is situated near the south-west corner of the Jail compound, and was founded by Shah Abu Turab in 1698 A. D.

Masonry mosques are common even in the villages of North Sylhet, but, where the villagers cannot afford this luxury, service is often held in a small thatched hut. Near the Shahji Bazar railway station, in the south-west corner of the district, is the *darga* of Shah Fateh Ghazi, one of the companions of Shah Jalal. This *darga* is maintained from the rents received from a village which was granted to it by the Mughal Government, and has since been exempted from payment of land revenue, and a *mela* has for many years been held in the vicinity about the middle of January. In this same thana of Madhabpur there are the *dargas* of other famous Muhammadan saints,

i.e., of Shah Ahmed Ghazi at Fathepur, of Shah Ghyas Saheb at Charabhanga in pargana Ghyasnagar, of Shah Aulia in pargana Kasimnagar, of Shah Ali and Shah Ghazi near Kasimpur, and of the Panch Pirs at Alabakshpur. In Dhargam pargana, in Jaintia, there is the tomb of a great fakir called Patashah, at which offerings are made by those who are anxious to be cured of some disease or to be blessed with children. In the Pratapgarh pargana, to the south of Karimganj, there are several *mukams* which are said to have been founded by one of the Badshas of Delhi, who turned fakir and settled in that lonely spot. Timber traders, whether Muhammadan or Hindu, still worship at these places, and it is said that tigers in former days used to visit these shrines on Thursday nights, and eat any food left for them, without molesting the persons stopping in the *mukam*. Thursdays are still observed as holy days by the lumber men in these hills, and timber is neither felled nor dragged on that day of the week. Nearly all the Muhammadans of Sylhet are Sunnis, but there is one important family, that of Moulavi Ali Amjad Khan, which professes the Shiah creed.

Hinduism is divided into three main sects, Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism. At the census of 1901 nearly 30 per cent. of the Hindus returned themselves as Saktists, $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as worshippers of Siva, $53\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. as Vaishnavites, and 11 per cent. failed to specify the particular form of that religion to which they owed allegiance. Saktists worship the reproductive powers of nature as manifested in the female, and Sivaites the male emblem of fertility. The

latter adore Siva, the former his wife Sakti. The Vaishnavites represent a revolt against the haughty pretensions of the Brahmans and the degrading rites of the Tantric worship. Little attention is paid to caste restrictions, the use of animal food and wine is deprecated, and the slaughter of animals in sacrifice forbidden. Krishna is the particular manifestation of the deity selected for special reverence, and *sankirtan*, or music and songs, is declared to be the most suitable form of worship. The family home of Chaitanya, the great Vaishnavite reformer, who was born in 1484 A.D., was situated at Dhakadakshin, about ten miles south-east of Sylhet town, and most of his followers regard him as the latest incarnation of Vishnu.

A somewhat curious sect is that which is known as the Shahaj or Kishori Bhojan. It was founded by one Kalachand Vidy-
The Shahaj Bhojan. alanker of the Bikrampur pargana in Dacca, and salvation is said to be obtained by imitating the amorous actions of Krishna at Brindaban. Each devotee has one or more female associates with whom, according to most accounts, he indulges, or endeavours to indulge, in very curious practices. The members of this sect are said to assemble secretly at night and to worship the mistress of their priest, who is supposed to represent Radha, the wife of Krishna. Food is offered to her, and, after she has taken a little, the *prasada*, or leavings, are distributed amongst the congregation. Songs are sung, ganja is consumed, and a good deal of sexual intercourse is supposed to take place. The female worshippers are

generally young widows, and most of the members of this sect are persons of low caste.

There are few masonry temples in Sylhet, and religious buildings usually take the form of *akhra*s for the Vaishnavites, and Kali or Durga *baris* for the worshippers of Sakti. **Sacred places in Sylhet.** An *akhra* is a religious institution inhabited by Vaishnavite devotees, who are supported by the contributions of their immediate disciples or of devout Hindus in general. There is little of dignity either in the demeanour of the inmates or in the appearance of the buildings in which they dwell. In many of these institutions there are women as well as men, and it would hardly be too much to say that under the specious cloak of religion a large proportion of the devotees live a life of sloth and sensual indulgence. The *akhra*s of Sylhet and Bithangal are described below, but these are two of the finest specimens of their kind, and the ordinary *akhra* is a place of much less interest and importance. In the Kali or Durga *bari* too, no less than in the *akhra*, Hinduism suffers, as it so often does, from the mean and unworthy form in which it is presented to the world. The emotions roused by a contemplation of the image of the goddess are hardly those of reverence or awe, and the building in which it is housed is generally a sorry shanty whose roof of hideous corrugated iron is supported on wooden posts. The unprejudiced observer in Sylhet can hardly fail to be impressed by the extraordinary difference between the outward manifestations of the Muhammadan and Hindu faith. In the one case there is simplicity, severity, cleanliness, and dignity. In the

other there is only too often nothing but grotesqueness, meanness, and squalor, and it is difficult to realize that its adherents include the most advanced and intelligent sections of the population.

The places which are most sacred in Saktist eyes are Phaljor in pargana Bhaurbhag in Jaintia, where there is a stone pillar which is said to be Sati's left leg, and Jainpur, about a mile and half south of Sylhet town, where her neck is said to have fallen when her body was dismembered by Vishnu. The latter *pith*, as the places consecrated by the fragments of Sati's severed body are called, has only recently been rediscovered. Sati's neck is represented by a piece of flat rock, similar to that found on most of the tilas round Sylhet. Her *bhairabi*, or guardian left to protect her by Siva, takes the usual form of a small upright pillar of rock shaped like a phallus. There is no temple over these remains, and hardly anything to distinguish them from many similar pieces of stone found in the neighbourhood of Sylhet town. At Barakia and at Chandipur, a village near Dwara Bazar in the Chhatak thana, there are shrines of Chandi, another incarnation of Sakti, which are visited by pilgrims on the Ram Navami day.

The following places are considered by the Sivaites to be particularly sacred: (1) Nirmai in the South Sylhet subdivision, where there is an image of Siva, before which people sometimes shave their hair in the hope of being delivered from disease. (2) Siddheswar's temple

at Badarpur, a few yards beyond the boundary of the district. (3) Rupnath in the Jaintia Hills about a mile and a half beyond the district boundary, and (4) Sarbananda about a mile and a half south of Sylhet town. The last two places are said to be the *bhairabis* of the neighbouring *piths*. Fairs are held at each of these shrines on the occasion of the Sivaratri festival. Large *lingams*, or stone pillars intended to represent the phallus, are situated three miles south of Jaintiapur; at Hatakeswar on the left bank of the Surma in the Karimganj subdivision where it is said to have been worshipped by Gaur Gobind, the last Raja of Sylhet; and at Tungeswar in the Habiganj subdivision.

The places which are held by the Vaishnavites in most respect are the temple of Chaitanya **Vaishnavite akhras.** at Dhakadakshin or Thakurbari, and the temple at Supatala in Panchakhanda. At the latter place there is a stone image of Vishnu, which has a considerable local reputation. There is another image of Vishnu in the Jagannathpur village, in the south-east corner of the Sunamganj subdivision. It is said to have been made by Viswakarma, the god of artificers himself, in the time of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, and on this account is visited by pilgrims from every part of the district. At Bithangal near the Mymensingh boundary there is an *akhra* under the management of the Jagan-mohani sect. At one time there was neither idol nor *tulsi* plant at this *akhra*, and cowdung was not used for cleansing purposes. Strong objection was, however, taken at Brindaban to this disregard of what the ordinary Hindu holds sacred, and a more orthodox ritual is now observed.

Ram Krishna, the founder of this place, is held in the greatest veneration, and offerings are made at his shrine by men who desire offspring or the increase of their herds. This section of the Vaishnavites at one time tried to worship an abstract god without shape or form, but this proved to be beyond the spiritual capacities of their disciples, and they sing the praises of Hari, Krishna, Rama and even Chaitanya. Bithangal has completely eclipsed the *akhra* at Masulia near Habiganj, which contains the tomb of Jaganmohan, the founder of the sect. It is the wealthiest and most prosperous *akhra* in Sylhet, and is said to receive as much Rs. 40,000 per annum in the form of offerings from its disciples. The buildings are of considerable size, and are of masonry, and several of the rooms are paved with marble.

Other famous *akhra*s are situated at Jugaltila in Sylhet, where the mahunta is invariably a Brahman ; at Panisail in the Indeswar pargana in South Sylhet ; and at Nayagaon in Sunamganj. The last named *akhra* has recently been started in honour of Adwaita, one of Chaitanya's followers, who is said to have been an incarnation of Siva. The *akhra* of Jugaltila is said to have been founded some 200 years ago by one Jugal Kiscra mahunta, who is supposed to have been an incarnation of the deity. It is endowed with landed property which brings in from one thousand to fifteen hundred rupees a year, and has some seven or eight hundred disciples, each of whom contributes on the average about As. 12 per mensem towards its maintenance. It is situated on a low hill, approached by a flight of masonry steps, and the idol is placed in an open shed

consisting of a corrugated iron roof supported on wooden posts. There are quarters for some thirty resident disciples, but all of the buildings are mean and squalid, and the place is in no way comparable with the more important *sattras* in Assam.

There are other places revered by all Hindus alike, irrespective of their sect. A certain **Other sacred places.** portion of the Panatirtha river, near the village Ghagtia becomes as sacred as the Ganges on the occasion of the Baruni, and pilgrims flock in numbers to bathe in the holy waters. In the south-west corner of the Habiganj subdivision, there is a temple at Krishnapur, at which pilgrims worship after they have bathed in the sacred pool of Brahmakunda, which is situated just across the boundary of Hill Tippera. Another sacred pool is known as Tamptakunda and is situated in pargana Panchbhag in Jaintia. This pool is said to become quite warm on the occasion of the Baruni, and it is possible that the water has in reality some mineral properties. Special sanctity is also said to attach to the place where the Manu and the Kusiara meet. The absence of any Hindu temples of importance is quite intelligible. Sylhet came under the influence of the Muhammadans at an early date, and, prior to its conquest, there were no local notables of sufficient wealth and power, to erect masonry buildings of any size or permanence. The country seems to have been split up into a number of petty principalities, and these small lordlings of a jungly frontier tract had not the means, even if they had the inclination, of raising temples to the glorification of god's name and the commemoration of

their own. The statement appended to this chapter shows in a consolidated form the various sacred places in the district. Some of these shrines are surmounted by a brick built temple, but in many cases the deity is hidden in a rough unhewn piece of stone, protected from the sun and rain by a miserable hut of bamboo and thatch.

The statement in the margin shows the number of persons returned under the different religions which had a comparatively small number of adherents in the district in 1901. The animistic tribes are found at the foot of the hills along the northern and southern boundary, and are Khasis and Garos in the north, and Tipperas in the south. A considerable proportion of the followers of this religion were, however, jungly coolies, Oraons, Santals, and people of that class. The Jains are the Marwari merchants from Rajputana, and the Brahmos are recruited from the ranks of the more thoughtful and educated amongst the Hindus, and are not unnaturally found living in the towns.

Minor Religions.			
Animists	::	::	11,337
Jains	::	::	141
Brahmos	::	::	47
Buddhists	::	::	7

The total number of Christians (744) is small, and the number of native Christians (394) smaller still. Sylhet is too civilized to allow of conversion proceeding rapidly, and in the twenty years ending with 1901 the number of native Christians only increased by 130. Members of the Welsh Mission are stationed at Sylhet, Maulavi Bazar, and Karimganj, but they have only met with a small measure of success, and in 1901 they had but 80 followers. This is

Christianity.

not due to any personal hostility towards the preachers of the gospel. A well-known missionary, the Reverend Mr. Pryse, was universally esteemed, and, on his death, the Hindus of the town defrayed the cost of the erection of his tombstone, and founded a library to commemorate his name. On social grounds there are, however, the strongest objections to a change of faith. The neophyte, whether he embraces Christianity or Muhammadanism, has to abjure too much, and there are at present no signs of any general movement towards the adoption of the western creed. The native Christians are distributed fairly impartially over most of the principal sects. In 1901, there were 52 Anglicans, 48 Baptists, 85 members of minor denominations, most of whom failed to specify their sect, and 126 Roman Catholics.

The bulk of the Roman Catholic community live at the village of Bandasil, on the left bank of the Barak, a mile below Badarpur. Their forefathers are said to have been settled there at the beginning of the 18th century by a Muhammadan Nawab, who came from Meerut with a party of Musalmans and Native Christians; the latter, according to the village traditions, being employed to serve his guns. Where the Nawab recruited these men history does not relate, but they are said to have built a fort in Bandasil and to have settled round it. After the Burmese war the Nawab was rewarded for his loyalty by a grant of land in Baniyachung, the proceeds of which enabled the Roman Catholics of Bandasil to live in idleness. Quarrels broke out in the small community, their land was gradually sold to the surrounding villagers, and most of the people now earn their living by domestic

service. Since 1891, there has been a resident Roman Catholic priest at Bandasil.

Sylhet like the rest of Assam is a rural area, but the percentage of the population supported by agriculture (81·5), though high, is lower than in any other district in the plains except Kamrup. The explanation lies in the fact that occupation is somewhat more specialized than in Assam. The functional castes exist, and to some extent follow their traditional occupations, and the spiritual needs of the people have ample provision made for them. The

Occupation.

Number of persons to each, Sylhet. Darrang.			
Barber	...	...	769 3,666
Washerman	...	...	789 2,666
Priest	...	...	227 1,629

statement in the margin shows the number of persons in the district for each person actually employed as a barber, washerman, or priest in Sylhet, and in Darrang which is a purely rural district. The number of priests is particularly large in Habiganj, and, with real discretion, they avoid the marshy country lying to the north of this subdivision. The fishing industry is of considerable importance in the flooded tracts to the west, where a trade is carried on in cured as well as in dried fish. In North Sylhet the fishermen are not so numerous, and they are comparatively scarce in South Sylhet and Karimganj, where the level of the country rises, and the area of submerged land is not so large. The greater portion of Sylhet is permanently settled, but settlement was made direct with the actual cultivators, and the number of estates is unusually large. According to the census returns, which have, however, in a matter of this kind to be accepted with a certain degree of caution, nearly one-third of the

total agricultural population were cultivating their own land. In North Sylhet, the number of persons holding direct from Government was almost equal to the number of tenants, but the subdivision includes the Jaintia Parganas which are temporarily settled. In Karimganj also, the number of landholders is about two-thirds of that of the tenants, but in the three remaining subdivisions the tenants are in a very large majority. The only occupations in addition to those mentioned, which in 1901 supported more than one per cent. of the total population, were garden labour, general labour, and begging. Women do not, as a rule, work in the fields in Sylhet, and the proportion of actual workers is thus considerably lower than in Assam proper. In 1901, the workers only formed 38 per cent. of the whole, as compared with 67 per cent. in a district like Lakhimpur. Further details with regard to the occupations of the people will be found in Table IV.

The wealthiest family of Sylhet is that of Maulavi Ali Amjad Khan of Langla. The **Leading families.** founder of the family was one Maulavi Muhammad Rabi, who was tutor to the sons of the Nawab of Murshidabad, and in 1735 A.D. received as a reward a large *jaghir* of land near his house at Langla. His son Maulavi Muhammad Ali Khan was appointed Kazi of Sylhet in 1773 A.D., and his estates were assessed to revenue in 1819 A.D. He was succeeded by his son Gous Ali Khan, who was accused of having supplied rations to the mutineers in 1857, but was acquitted of the charge, and was the grandfather of the present zamindar.

One of the most respected, though not one of the wealthiest families in Sylhet, are the **The Mauzumdar family.** Mauzumdars. The founder of the family was Surwar Khan, who, in 1464 A.D., reduced to order the revolting Zamindars of Ita and Pratapgarh. His son, Mir Khan, was appointed Kanungo of Sylhet, and this office remained in the family till it was finally abolished at the time of the permanent settlement. Several places in the district take their names from different members of this family. Thus Jahanpur is called after Jahan, son of Lodi Khan, who subdued Khoja Osman Khan, the zamindar of Bhanugach. Keshwar Khan, who held office in the time of Aurangzeb, dug a canal which is still called Keshwar Khal, and Mahtab Khan, his son, founded a bazar which bears his name. The present representative of the family, Khan Majid Bakht Bahadur, was for some time a Deputy Magistrate in Bengal and an Extra Assistant Commissioner in Assam. His father Saiyed Bakht resided for several years in Mecca, and was made a member of the Sherif's Council and decorated with the Star of the Mejidhi. Both he and his son, Hamid Bakht, were exempted from attendance in the civil courts, a privilege which is at the present moment (1904) accorded to only one individual in the Province, the gosain of the Dakhinpat, *sattr*a in Sibsagar.

The Dastidars are said to be descended from the same stock as the Mauzumdars, though **The Dastidars.** the latter family were converted to the faith of Islam in the 15th century, while the Dastidars have remained faithful to the Hinduism of their forefathers.

The founder of the family, Kabiballabh, was appointed Dastidar of Sylhet, and in that capacity had charge of the royal seal. Hare Krishna, who in 1722 was appointed Amil of Sylhet, is perhaps the best known member of the family, which at the present day has lost most of its former wealth.

The Dewan family was founded by a native of the Hooghli district, who settled in Sylhet in the middle of the 16th century.

One of his descendants, named Manik Chandra, was appointed Dewan, and his son, Murari Chand, was, in his time, one of the most conspicuous figures in the society of the district. The present head of the family, Raja Giris Chandra Roy, is the grandson of this gentleman, and has established a college in the town in honour of his memory. In 1898, the title of Raja was conferred upon him, but his estate has been considerably reduced by his numerous benevolences and generous and hospitable style of living. There is another Dewan family at Baniyachung descended from the Gobind Singh referred to in the second chapter (p. 25.)

The great bulk of the Hindus marry in the orthodox way, by what is known as the *prajapatya* form, which corresponds to the *hompura* of the Assam Valley. The ordinary marriage ceremony is much as follows, but the style in which it is carried out depends upon the resources of the contracting parties.

The first thing to be done after a match has been agreed upon is to fix the date for the ceremony. The bridegroom's representatives proceed to the house of the

bride with fish, sweetmeats, curds, and betelnuts, and, on their arrival, the Brahmans of the village are summoned and asked to select an auspicious day. The next stage is known as Panakhili, and consists of the offering of betelnuts and leaves, with two small pieces of gold and silver, to the family idol, or to the idol of a neighbour, if neither of the families possesses an idol of its own. Two nights before the wedding day the bridegroom and the bride are solemnly bathed, and on the following morning the general merry-making begins. A party of drummers is called in, who, with short intervals of rest, keep up their unmelodious music day and night; the children of the two families are decked out in their best; the bride and the groom are solemnly bathed; and friends and relatives assemble from all sides. At night a theatrical performance is given in the bridegroom's house, and a party is despatched to fetch the bride, for in the Surma Valley the actual ceremony generally takes place in the house of the groom. On this night, also, the contracting parties are once more solemnly bathed. Early the next morning a priest sprinkles water over them from a mango leaf, and places a daub of an oleaginous black ointment, called *adibash*, upon their foreheads. During the day the bridegroom, and some male relatives on behalf of the bride, offer oblations to the spirits of their ancestors, and a feast is given to the Brahmans and the assembled guests. In the evening, the contracting parties are again solemnly bathed and attired in their best clothes, and, pending the advent of the bride, who arrives in the middle of the night attended by most unmusical musicians, the groom is allowed to witness the theatrical performance that is going on.

When the time for the actual ceremony has come, he is anointed with sandalwood, a crown of pith and flowers is placed upon his head, and he is escorted to the front of the main house, where a maid or married woman presents him with a ring, a pair of cloths, and some curds. Both parties then enter a small enclosure in the courtyard which has been fenced in with split bamboos and plantain trees, the groom is seated on a stool, and the bride marches round him seven times, throwing flowers and red powder over him as she completes each circuit. The next stage is called *sampradan*, and is the really binding part of the ceremony, when the girl and her dowry are formally handed over to her husband. A fire is then lighted, flowers, rice, and *ghi* are thrown upon it, and the priest utters the appropriate *mantras*. By this time the young pair are thoroughly worn out, and gladly avail themselves of the permission to seek what rest they can for the remainder of the night. On the following day they are again solemnly bathed, and are conducted round four bamboos in the courtyard, and a feast is given to the assembled guests. This ceremony is repeated on the fourth day, as on the intervening day the bride and groom are not allowed to see one another, and the marriage is then said to be complete.

Except among the higher ranks of Hindu society, it is the general practice in Sylhet for a man to purchase his wife. The usual price amongst the lower castes ranges from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50, though a girl can sometimes be obtained for a ten rupee note, a price which could not be thought excessive by even the poorest cultivator. Shahas, on

Cost of the
Ceremony.

the other hand, when marrying into a good family, have been known to salve the conscience of the father by the gift of as much as fifty times that sum. That, after all, is not too much for a wealthy parvenu to pay for the privilege of being allowed to call a respectable Kayastha father-in-law. The other expenses incidental to a marriage are incurred on Brahmins, who expect their customary fee, on musicians, palki-bearers, and other hangers on, and on fireworks, clothes, presents, and quantities of food. On this an ordinary cultivator will expend some Rs. 30 or 40, but a rich man's wedding may cost anything up to Rs. 1,000. Widow re-marriage is regarded with growing disfavour, even amongst the lowest castes, with the natural result that there is an increasing difficulty in obtaining wives. Even if every Hindu woman were pressed into the service, some thousands of men would still remain unwed. Under these circumstances it seems a lamentable waste of good material to leave some 60,000 Hindu widows, none younger than fifteen and none as much as forty, to lead a depressing life of dreary solitude. In the Habiganj subdivision, the Bengal custom of paying for the bridegroom is gradually gaining ground amongst the upper classes, and the father of the girl is expected, not only to defray the expenses of the wedding, but to pay for the education of his son-in-law as well.

Amongst the Tipperas the familiar form of marriage by service is in vogue, and the man is expected to live some time in the house of his father-in-law and work for him in his *jhums*. The only trace of this custom amongst the Hindus of Sylhet, who differ in this particular from the

Assamese, is to be found in the *ghor jamai*, who is permanently absorbed into the family of his father-in-law. The Manipuris, like the Assamese, sometimes evade the demands of a too avaricious parent by the simple process of carrying off the girl, who offers only a nominal resistance to her abduction. Having obtained possession of her person it is a comparatively easy matter to come to terms, and no social obloquy attaches to the young couple.

As far as the feasting and general merry-making is concerned the Muhammadan marriage does not differ materially from the Hindu, but it has, of course, no religious side. The essential parts are the formal assent to the contract given by the bridegroom and the bride, and the execution of the *kabin*.

The following are the principal festivals of the Hindus :—

The Saraswati puja is held in January or February.

Hindu festivals.

A clay image of the Goddess of Learning is procured, offerings of flower, leaves, and eatables are made to it, and the worshippers abstain from book and pen. This puja is usually confined to the higher classes of society. The Suryapuja is held in the month of Magh (middle of January, to the middle of February) in honor of the Sun God. A plantain tree is set up in the courtyard and decorated with flowers, and offerings of leaves, eatables, and flowers are made, the women singing all the while in honor of the Sun God. In February or March comes the Sivarati, during which the worshippers fast during the day and sit up at night to worship Siva's lingam and eat bhang and ganja.

About a fortnight later there is the Doljatra. On this occasion the image of Vishnu is worshipped, anointed with red powder, and then swung to and fro, while the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of the amorous contests of Krishna with the milkmaids of Brindaban. Towards the end of March there is the Barunisnan, when ablutions are offered to the spirit of the departed ancestors, and the villagers feast on curds, parched grain, and molasses. The Rath Jatra takes place in June or July, when an image of Vishnu or Jagannath is dragged about on a car. On the last day of Sraban (middle of August) there is the Bishahari or Manasa puja in honour of the goddess of snakes. This puja is very popular in Sylhet, and is observed by all Hindus, high and low, rich and poor alike. Flowers, leaves, and eatables are offered to a clay image of the goddess, and goats, ducks, and pigeons are sacrificed. A few days later the Vaishnavite section of the community, and more specially the Vaishnavite ascetics, or Bairagis as they are called, celebrate the Jhulan festival. Images of Krishna and Radhika are worshipped and swung to and fro. There is much singing on this occasion at night. In the same month, or in the month following, there is the Janmastami in honour of the birth of Krishna. The main feature of this festival, which is observed by every devout Hindu, is abstinence from food and drink. In September or October there is the Durga puja which is a time for general merry-making. New clothes are given to the children, members of the family who are away return home, and there is general feasting and jollification.

The rich purchase clay images of Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik and Ganesh. Poorer people make their offerings to plantain trees or earthen jars filled with water. The puja lasts for four days. Goats are usually sacrificed on each of the first three days and on the third day those who can afford to do so kill a buffalo. On the last day the goddess is worshipped with flowers, leaves, and eatables and then thrown into water amidst singing and beating of cymbals.

Four days after the Durga puja comes the Lakshmi puja, and in the last quarter of the year there are the Kali, Kartik, Jagadhatri and Rash pujas. The last named festival is only observed by the Vaishnavites and is especially popular with the Manipuris.

A special form of religious ceremony is known as the *noaka*, or boat puja, and is performed by a wealthy man in satisfaction of a vow, who generally spends from Rs. 300 to Rs. 500 on the ceremony. A shed is built, at the end of which is a boat painted and gilt, from which rise, tier upon tier, the images of various gods, amongst whom Bishahari is generally the most prominent. For several days sacrifices are offered to the deities, and Brahmans, who are well paid and feasted for their services, offer up their prayers. At the end of this time the house and its contents are abandoned and allowed to fall to pieces. Every Hindu has a *guru*, or religious teacher, to whom he makes an annual offering varying from 2 annas to 5 rupees according to his means.

The Pous or Uttarayan Sankranti, held about the middle of January, has no religious associations and corre-

sponds to the Magh *bihu* of the Assam valley. The villagers light bonfires in the rice fields, at which they warm themselves after the morning bath, and devote the day to merry-making.

In the north and west of the district, where, in the rains, much of the country goes completely under water, boat races are a source of great amusement. The *khel naos*, as they are called, are long narrow canoes, with a peaked stern and prow, which are carved, and painted with the brightest colours. They often carry a crew of forty men, who sit in pairs and paddle with the utmost vigour, while a corybantic individual dances in the centre of the boat, and shrieks out a weird song to the accompaniment of a pair of clashing cymbals. The course is generally a fairly short one, but, as soon as one race is decided, the boat-men paddle slowly back to the starting point, and at once set off again upon their wild career, and the process is repeated time after time till all the competitors are thoroughly exhausted.

Tigers are found near the foot of the Khasi Hills and are netted by the villagers. Directly a kill takes place the tiger is followed by the bravest and most expert shikari and is marked down to his lair. The villagers then turn out armed with spears, daos, and guns, and keep up a terrific din till the place has been surrounded by a strong net fastened to bamboo posts. The space enclosed is generally covered with jungle, in which the unfortunate animal lies hidden, but a heavy log with ropes attached is slipped underneath the net, and dragged

backwards and forwards till the grass is beaten down. Furious at this disturbance the tiger charges the net, but it is driven back with spears and sharp bamboos. As time goes on the animal becomes exhausted from weariness and thirst. A split bamboo is then thrust through the net, and water is poured down it into the huge beast's mouth to revive its flagging energies. During the night, large fires are lighted all around the net, and the people amuse themselves with songs and music. The tiger is sometimes teased and worried for a week or more and no one is allowed to attempt to kill it, till a majority of the whole crowd assembled have decided that the proper time has come. The first shot is then offered to the man of highest rank who happens to be present. Heavy fines are imposed by the village community on any persons who fail to attend on receiving information of the kill, who leave their posts before they are relieved, or who break any of the other rules laid down by the community. In the same portion of the district wild pigs are shot, and, sometimes, speared by men mounted on tame buffaloes. The pig does not notice the man on the buffalo's back, and he is thus enabled to approach sufficiently near to deal a blow which generally proves fatal. Occasionally, also, pigs are speared from trees, but this form of hunting is only crowned with success when the animal breaks cover in exactly the desired direction. In the Sunamganj subdivision, the villagers often race their ponies in the *haors*, the Pous Sankranti being the season of the year which is specially set apart for these local Derbys. Boys and young men play cricket and football, and native games akin to prisoner's base and tip-cheese. Song and music, of course, are popular, and theatrical

performances are given at weddings and on feast days. A special form of dance is known as the *ghatu's* nautch. The *ghatu* is a young Nat boy who is hired by the villagers, often at a considerable salary, to dance to them in the evening. This form of amusement is very popular, but it is doubtful whether it has a very elevating effect upon the moral character of the people, as the *ghatu* is generally treated as a pet by the younger members of the community.

List of Temples.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of temple.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the temple is sacred.	Brief description of building.
Dhakadakehin—Village Dattarail.	Mahaprabhu ...	NORTH SYLHET. Jagannath Misra and others of his family, about 1700 A. D.	Chaitanya and Nityananda.	The masonry building was destroyed by the earthquake of 1897. The idol is now in a <i>cukka</i> house.
Nijpat—Jaintiapuri Raj.	Jaintesvari ...	Not known ...	Kali.	.....
Do.	Siva Mandir ...	Do. ...	Siva	Masonry.
Sylhet town	Sridurgabari ...	Lala Gour Hari Singh, about 1780 A. D.	Sridurga	Corrugated iron roof and masonry walls.
Do. (Kaligbat)	Kalibari ...	Lala Har Chandra Singh, about 1800 A. D.	Kali	Do. do.
Do. (Lamabazar).	Dasnami ...	About 1750 A. D.	Kalbhairab	Masonry.
Mandalibogh, pargana Chhatak.	Kalibari ...	SUNAMGANJ. Hindu zamindars of Baniyachung, about 1300 A. D.	Kali	Do.

List of Temples—contd.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of temple.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the temple is sacred.	Brief description of building.
Tatikona, pargana Chhatak.	Kalibari	SUNAMGANJ—contd. Tilak Nandi, about 1800 A. D.	Kali	Masonry.
Town Sunamganj ...	Do.	Residents of Sunamganj in 1882 A. D.	Do.	Cutch.
Amirthani, pargana Baniyachung.	Do.	HABIGANJ. Keshab Misra ...	Kali, Mahadev and Vishnu.	Masonry building.
Biegaon, Raja's cutchery.	Rajbazar Kali-bari.	Raja Ram Ganga Manikya Bahadur of Hill Tippera.	Kali	Cutch.
Town Habiganj ...	Habiganj Kali-bari.	About 1700 A. D. The temple was first located at Laskerpur, but in 1882 was transferred to Habiganj.	Kali, Mahadev and Vishnu.	Masonry.
Gayghar, pargana Ita	Uma-Mahesvar...	SOUTH SYLHET. Hridayananda Datta of Gayghar 1757 A. D.	Mahesvar and his consort Uma	Cutch.

Kadambata, pargana Shameharnagar.	Kalibari	...	Rajaram Das of Panchgaon in 1728 A. D.	Kali	...	Do.
Khalipur, pargana Hauli Satrasati.	Baneavar	..	Jay Gobinda Sarma, about the middle of the nineteenth century.	Baneavar (Siva)	Do.	Do.
Maekandi, pargana Shaitanagar.	Kali and Siver- bari.	...	Bhabani Prasad Chaudhuri, about 1700 A. D.	Kali known as Rajyeeswari and Siva.	Masonry.	Masonry.
Panchgaon, pargana Ita.	Kalibari	...	Raghudev Bhattacharya of Panchgaon in 1704 A. D.	Kali	...	Cutch.
Sadhubati, pargana Hauli Sarasati.	Do.	...	Gangaram Siromani, about 1800 A. D.	Do.	...	Do.
Sankarsene, pargana Balisira.	Nirmai Siverbari	...	Nirmai and Hurmai two un- married ladies of the Tippera Royal family in 1454 A. D.	Siva	...	Do.
Sultanpur, pargana Chaitanyanagar.	Maulavi Bazar Kalibari.	...	Sarvananda Sarma in 1881 A. D.	Kali	...	Do.
Soratola, pargana Panchakhandakala.	Basudev	...	Not known	Basudev	...	A brick building on a small hill, a fair is held here annually during the Ula Rath.

List of Akhras.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the Akhra is sacred.	Brief description of building.
		NORTH SYLHET. BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.		
Belaganj ...	Madanmohan ...	Residents of Belaganj bazar in 1880 A. D.	Madanmohan ...	Masonry.
Bhatirkhola village ...	Goyalpara ...	About 1750 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Do.
Rajaganj ...	Rajaganj ...	.....	Brindaban Chandra.	Do.
Sadipur ...	Sadipur ...	Murari Chand about 1850.		
Sankhi village ...	Lalabazar ...	Jagannath Nazir about 1800 A. D.	Mahaprabhu Kriehna Chandra.	Do.
Tengra village ...	Tengra ...	About 1750 A. D.	Mahaprabhu ...	Cutch.
Town Sylhet (Dharmapasha.)	Taltola ...	About 1780 A. D.	Gobindajee ...	Masonry.
Do. (Gopaltila.)	Gopaltila ...	About 1750 A. D.	Gopaljee ...	Do

Do.	(Kazal Haor)	Jugaltila ...	Jugal Kisore about 1700 A. D.	Radha Madhab...	Do.
Do.	(Kalighat)	Jagannathjee ...	About 1800 A. D.	Jagannathjee ...	Do.
Do.	do.	Narsingjee ...	A Sanyasi about 1750 A. D. ...	Narsingjee ...	Do.
Do.	(Mirabazar.)	Baladebjee ...	Madan Munshi of Raynagar about 1750 A. D.	Baladebjee ...	Do.
Do.	(Nachir Ali.)	Syamsundar ...	About 1850 A. D.	Syamsundar ...	Cutch.
Do.	(Noya Sarak.)	Gobindajee ...	Jagannath Nazir of Bagherkhola about 1850 A. D.	Gobindajee ...	Masonry.
Do.	(Zindabazar.)	Do.	Jasobanta Singh about 1800 A. D.	Do.	Cutch.
Do.	do.	Jagannath ...	Hara Kriehoa Gossain, about 1750 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Do.
SUNAMGANJ.					
BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS.					
Jagannathpur ...	...	Basudeberbari...	In the 15th century A. D.	Basudeb ...	Cutch.
Town Sunamganj ...	...	Akhra ...	Sunamdi an ex-soldier about 1800 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Masonry.

List of Akhras—contd.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the Akhra is sacred.	Brief description of building.
Chhatak Bazar ...		MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES. The shop-keepers of Chhatak about 1800 A. D.	Chaitanya ...	Masonry.
Jagannathpur ...		The Jagannathpur Chaudhuries about 1800 A. D.	Jagannath ...	Cutchia.
Patharia ...		Janaki Dasi Baishnabi in 1890 A. D.	Radhamadhab ...	Cutchia house.
Puran Laur, pargana Laur ...		Golak Chandra Das Purkayastha in 1898 A. D.	Advaita ...	Do.
Tatikona, pargana Chhatak ...		Jagannath Chaudhuri about 1800 A. D.	Chaitanya ...	Masonry.
Ghatia ...	Maha prabhur Akhra.	HABIGANJ. BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS. Ram Narayan and Rej Narayan Shabs.	Gauranga Mahaprabhu.	Masonry.

Kamrapur	... Narsingh "	Hara Sundari Chaudhurani ...	Jagannath Balaram and Subhadra	Do.
Murakari	... Bara "	Krishna Chandra Gossain ...	Radha Gobinda	Do.
Nabiganj Bazar	... Gobindajee "	Krishna Das Namayat ...	Gobindajee ...	Do.
Noagaon	... Giridhari "	.....	Giridhari ...	Cutch.
Barisal ...	... Mahaprabhu "	Lal Singh Chaudhuri of Barisal about 1700 A. D.	Mahaprabhu ...	Masonry.
		MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES.		
Bithangal	... Bithangal large Akhra.	Ram Krishna Gossain, date uncertain.	Tomb of Ram Krishna Gossain.	Do.
Ikram ...	... Mahaprabhu "	Bidura Nanda Gossain, about 1840 A. D.	Gauranga Mahaprabhu.	Do.
Jangal Raula	... Ram Krishna Gossain Akhra.	.....	Ram Krishna Gossain.	Do.
Krishnapur	... Krishna Gossain Akhra.	.....	Do.	Do.
Raki ...	... Jagabandhu Akhra.	A Raja of Hill Tippera, date uncertain.	Jagabandhu ...	Cutch.
Srimangal	... Bithangal new Akhra.	Ananta Das Baisanab about 1820 A. D.	Ram Krishna Gossain.	Masonry.

List of Akhras—concl'd.

Place or pargana in which situated.	Name of Akhra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Special god to whom the temple is sacred.	Brief description of building.
Lalapur known as Pacisail, pargana Indeevar.	Panisail East Akhra.	SOUTH SYLHET. BRAHMAN MAHUNTAS. Santaram Prabhu of Panisail about 1700 A. D.	Krishna	Masonry.
Do. ...	Do. West Akhra.	Do. do.	Do.	Do.
Abda, pargana Ita ...	Abdar Vishunupad.	MAHUNTAS OF OTHER CASTES. Anup Ram Datta of Gayghar in 1788 A. D.	Vishnu	Cutch.
Akhaikura, pargana Shameheroagar.	Akhaikura Akhra	Jagannath Des in 1834 A. D.	Jagannath	Masonry.
Biraimabad, pargana Shamehernagar.	Ajnaner Dewal	Kaahi Ram Das of Panchgaon in 1754 A. D.	Krishna	Cutch.
Dattapara known as Chandpur, pargana Hadli Satrasati.	Chandpur Akhra	Jibon, an ascetic about 1700 A. D.	Jagannath and Bura Thakur.	Do.

Unlike the temples and *sattras* in the Assam Valley, these places have not been endowed by the pious founder with a grant of land. Most of them own the actual sites on which they stand, but beyond this nothing more, and the largest estate is only about 400 acres which is held by the Patharis Akhra in Sunamganj.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Agriculture—Rice—Mustard and Pulse—Linseed and Til—Sugarcane—Jute—Cotton—Garden Crops—Agricultural Implements—Storage and Threshing of Grain—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Yield and Value of Crops—General Remarks—Live Stock—Floods—Development of Tea Industry—Labourers employed—Soil required—Varieties of Plant—System of Cultivation and Manufacture—Green Tea—Outturn and Prices—Forests.

The principal crops grown in the district are rice, which is the staple food grain, tea, **Agriculture.** mustard, pulse, linseed, sesamum or til, sugar cane, jute and cotton ; but, as the greater part of Sylhet is permanently settled and has not been cadastrally surveyed, there are no reliable data to show the area planted out with each of these different staples. In this, as in other matters, the historian of Sylhet labours under special difficulties, due to Mr. Willes' decennial settlement. It is impossible to trace the extension of cultivation, it is impossible to say, even at the present day, what proportion of the district is under crop, what proportion fallow, and what proportion waste, it is impossible to mark the rise or fall of any staple in the estimation of the peasants. Offensive though this doubtless is to the precise mind of the statistician, it is doubtful whether the practical loss is in reality very great. Although we cannot express the fact in percentages worked out to several places of decimals, we still can feel assured that Sylhet is densely peopled, that the proportion of good waste land available for cultivation is very small, and that during the last century there was

a great extension of the area under the plough. We know that the staple food grain is rice, that in normal years the district produces much more than it can possibly consume,* and that the chance of anything even approaching scarcity is very small. The direct intervention of Government is so seldom necessary, that we can acquiesce, with some show of grace, in general knowledge, as distinguished from the particular information available for other districts. In the following paragraphs some account is given of the system followed for the cultivation of the various crops.

Rice, as has already been said, is the staple food crop, and probably covers two million acres of land. It falls into four main divisions, *sail*, which is transplanted on higher land, and *aman*, which is sown broadcast or transplanted on lower land, and, like *sail*, is reaped in winter; and *aus* and *boro*, both of which belong to the category of summer rice.

Sail is first sown broadcast in little beds or nurseries. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times till it is reduced to a fine puddle of mud, and is not unfrequently manured with cowdung and sweepings. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice fields in

* In 1850 Dr. Hooker wrote as follows: "The Silchar rice is of admirable quality, and much is imported to Sylhet, the jheels not producing grain enough for the consumption of the people. Though Silchar grows enough for ten times its population, there was actually a famine six weeks before our arrival, the demand from Sylhet being so great."—Himalayan Journals, Vol. II., p. 319. Sylhet has always been in normal years a great rice exporting district, and it is difficult to believe that it at any time drew its food supplies from Cachar. At the present day of course rice goes from Sylhet to Cachar.

the proportion of from 1 to 14 to 1 to 18. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to six times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, and the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water, are repaired. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*gusi*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, but the handfuls are generally placed about 9 inches apart. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and, if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September. The work is of a most arduous description, as it involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown though the ears are still empty ; but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. The reapers

grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*hatta*) are tied up with a piece of straw, and made up into bundles, which are affixed to either end of the bamboos which the villagers carry across their shoulders. The principal kinds of *sail* are *terab-uli*, which ripens early about the beginning of December and has a large yellow grain, *balam* which has a large reddish grain, *khai* which has a large yellowish grain, and *thakur bhog* which has a fine grain and is extremely palatable. *Sail* is often grown on land from which a crop of *aus* has been already taken.

Aman is sown broadcast about the middle of April, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings.

Aman.

It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sail*, and are often dispensed with altogether. There are three principal varieties. *Bhogdhan* is grown on higher land, is sown earlier, and ripens in November. *Parisok* and *badal* thrive in deeper water and are not harvested till December. Other varieties reported are *lengri*, *hiraman*, *gutakh*, *hater mura*, *paricha*, *goyai*, *kalakura*, *dudbal*, *naliuri*, *jari*, *longmur betair*, and *birun*. Of these *goyai*, *kalakura*, and *hiraman* have a long stem and so are generally grown in low lying tracts. *Badal*, *paricha*, *lengri*, and *gutakh* grow to a medium height and are sown on land which is neither very high nor very low. The other kinds grow on moderately high lands. *Dudbal*, *naliuri*, *jari*, and *longmur* are generally sown on land which lies near the hills.

Aus is generally grown near village sites, on the edge of *haors*, and on the banks of the rivers, which are usually above the level of the surrounding country. Ploughing usually begins when the ground has been softened by the rains of March, and is repeated some five or six times. The seed is sown broadcast in April and May, and the plant grows with such rapidity that it is ready for the sickle in June or July. *Aus* is sometimes transplanted, and is generally followed by a crop of *sail*. This kind of rice is usually cut off close by the ground, as, at the season of the year when it is reaped, the straw is in much request for fodder. The principal varieties of *aus* are *dumahi* which ripens in $2\frac{1}{2}$ months, *chengri* which takes 3 months to mature, and *murali* which is sown on low lying land and is ready in about 4 months. *Hati* is so called because in theory it takes 60 days to ripen, though in practice it generally requires from two to four weeks more. The yield varies with the length of time the crop is in the ground, and the outturn of *dumahi* or *hati* is considerably less than that of the slower growing varieties. In spite of the rapidity with which *aus* ripens it can be seen in some part of the district at most seasons of the year. Low land *aus* is sometimes sown at the beginning of February, and in places the harvesting is still in progress in the middle of October.

Boro is an early rice which is grown in *haors*, and more especially in the Sunamganj subdivision, before the floods rise. It is sown on high land near *bils* and streams, on low land which is under water at the time of transplantation

but dries up shortly afterwards, and on land which lies so low that it can dispense with what is required by the first two kinds of land, *i.e.*, artificial irrigation. A further advantage appertains to this low land in that no ploughing is required, but the crop is very liable to be destroyed by flood, and the outturn for *boro* is comparatively small. *Boro* rice is, however, generally grown on the sides of *haors*, after the floods subside, and is irrigated from the water which remains at the bottom of the basin, and is prevented from escaping by dams which also serve to raise its level. A simple form of water-lift is employed to raise the water from this central reservoir on to the fields. The trunk of a tree is hollowed out and an opening is left all along the upper surface. This trunk is placed at the edge of the reservoir, and the end that projects above the water is fastened by a rope to a stout bamboo that is fixed at right-angles to a bamboo upright. To the further end of this bamboo a heavy weight is affixed, which raises the opposite end and the hollow trunk attached to it, well above the water. When a man wishes to work the lift he stands on the further end of the hollow trunk and presses it below the water, which promptly runs in through the slit. He then steps off, the weight of the stone comes in to play, and the water is tilted up and runs into a channel just above the reservoir. The slope of the *haors* is very gradual, and by means of a series of these *kunds*, as they are called, the water is raised from the reservoir in the centre and distributed upwards from terrace to terrace. Towards the end of October, the fields are cleared of the aquatic plants that have taken root there in the rains, and the nursery beds are

prepared for the reception of the seed. The seed itself is soaked in water for four hours, then kept in a cool place for thirty-six hours, washed again, and left uncovered till the grain begins to shoot. It is then sown broadcast on the nursery and left to grow there for about two months. The young plants are then pulled up, kept for two days in a muddy place to allow the roots to develop, and finally planted out in the fields in January and February. The crop takes about three months to ripen, and, if it is submerged by an early flood, the villagers try to gather all they can by diving to the bottom, or by pulling it up with bamboo hooks. The cultivation of *boro* rice gives rise to a good deal of quarrelling. The owners of low land sometimes protect their crop by building dams which injure the fields of others, water is occasionally stolen, and the necessity for co-operation in the construction of dams and irrigation channels is a source of friction. This kind of rice is divided into two classes: *Sailboro*, and *boro*. The principal varieties of the former are *sail*, *tepi*, *banajira*, *pankait*, *bashful*, *atuatopa*, *rata*, *chandana*, *nahuatopa*, *gharmura*, *saulpani*, *barsail*, *harnarata*, and of the latter, *boro*, *kali boro*, *khaiya boro*, *lara boro*, *dhali boro* and *guabhir boro*.

Mustard is grown on low lying land in the Jaintia Parganas, which, in its natural state, is covered with high grass and reeds, on high land near the homestead from which a crop of seedlings has been already taken, and in *haors*. The total area under this plant is estimated at some 37,000 acres.

**Mustard and
Pulse.**

In Jaintia, the jungle is burnt at the beginning of the cold weather, and the ashes serve the purpose of manure. The seed is sown at the beginning of November after a single ploughing, and even this is occasionally dispensed with. In *haors* more ploughing is required, and the harvest is extremely insecure, as heavy rain in early spring may ruin the whole crop. High land near the homestead is ploughed some seven or eight times till reduced to dust, and is generally manured. The plants when ripe are pulled up, and the seed is trodden out by bullocks or threshed out with sticks. The area under pulse is comparatively small; the commonest varieties are *arhar* (*cajanus indicus*) and *maskalai* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*).

Linseed, like mustard, is grown on high land near the village site as well as in the *haors*.

Linseed and Til.

The ground is ploughed up twice or thrice in December, the seed is sown, and the crop is ready for harvest towards the end of March. The plants are then pulled up and dried, the seed is trodden out by cattle or threshed out with a stick, and finally sifted and winnowed. Heavy rain in March is injurious to the crop, and pigs near the Khasi Hills often do damage.

Til (*sesamum indicum*) is generally grown near the village site, and is almost a garden crop. The land is ploughed five or six times till reduced to a fine tilth, and is divided into little blocks about five feet square, by trenches three inches deep and nine inches broad. When the plants are about six inches high they are carefully weeded and hoed, and earth is spread over

their roots. The seed ripens in May, and the plants are dried and treated in the same way as linseed. Linseed is said to cover some sixty-nine or seventy thousand acres, whereas *til* is not grown on more than three or four thousand acres.

The area under sugar cane is said to be declining, as the profits obtained are considered hardly commensurate with the labour that it entails. It is sometimes planted on high land near the homestead, but the bulk of the area under cane is situated in the hills to the south of the Karimganj and South Sylhet subdivisions, where it is grown by ex-garden coolies. The following are the principal varieties cultivated in the district. The *dhol* or *dhali* stands about seven feet high, and is generally grown near homesteads, the *khagra* is a hard and thin variety of the *dhali*, and the *bombai* is of a purple colour and is juicier than either of the other two. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of *arhar dal* (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of

ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

The native form of mill consists of two wooden rollers, fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a beam, supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. Of recent years the wooden mill has been largely displaced by the iron mill which is easier to work. The cane is placed between the rollers, and crushed as it is slowly forced through. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potter's clay. Two of these vessels are placed about 9 feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred to the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel shaped like a small dug out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process

is complete. Pargana Taraf in the Habiganj subdivision is especially noted for the excellence of the molasses manufactured there.

The cultivation of jute is said to be extending but has not yet attained to any great dimensions, and in 1903-04 the total estimated area under this crop was only 9,200 acres. The plant is grown on high land near the village, and on the banks of the Kusiara and the Manu in the North and South Sylhet subdivisions. The land is ploughed, and ploughed deeply, some eight or ten times. The seeds are sown in March or April, and when the plants are from some ten to fifteen inches high, a harrow (*bindha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the field, and loosens the soil at the same time that it removes the weeds. When the plant is sown near the homestead the ground is liberally manured with cow-dung.

The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for transport to the market. The leaves of the jute plant are eaten fresh as a vegetable, and when dried are thought to possess medicinal properties. Small patches of rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where it is heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The

thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

Cotton is grown by Tipperas on the hills in the south of the district. The fibre is stiff and has a short staple, but the percentage of fibre to seed is unusually high.

One of the commonest of garden trees is the plantain (*musa sapientum*), of which there are several varieties. The best fruit is obtained from the *chenichampa*, which has a small well flavoured fruit, the *kulapati* and *safari*, large trees which yield large plantains, and the *dingamanik*, which has a soft trunk and long fruits, which are generally gathered and sold while still quite green, as if kept when ripe they soon develop a saline taste. There are two kinds of *athia* known as *ghi* and *bhim*. Both are valued for their soft leaves and the coolness of the pulp, but the former is preferred as it has fewer seeds. The *kachakala* has the same shape as the *athia*, but has a sharper taste and is generally used as a vegetable. Other varieties of the plantain are the *sail* or *gopi*, the *bartaban*, and *gerasunder*. The betelnut (*areca catechu*) is very common in the eastern part of the district, where groves of these graceful palms add much to the beauty of the landscape. The tree does not thrive if the roots are covered with water, and it is seldom seen in the submerged tracts in the western portion of Sylhet. Of recent years it has been attacked by an insect pest which makes it gradually shrivel up and die. The *pan* vine (*piper betel*) is occasionally trained up the stem of

the areca palm, but is generally grown by Baruis in carefully fenced gardens along the banks of the Kusiara or Manu, or in the hilly-country to the south. Other common fruit trees are the jack fruit and the mango, but the fruit of the latter tree is generally spoilt by worms. The vegetables which are most in evidence are gourds, pumpkins, cucumbers, beans, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), some of which attain an enormous size, radishes, and brinjals.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the mango or jack fruit tree, or some other hard wood.

**Agricultural
implements. The
plough.**

It consists of three parts—the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of bamboo fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20lbs., and, when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument. Ploughs in Sylhet are nearly always purchased, and not made at home as in the Assam Valley, and cost from As. 12 to Re. 1.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*ails*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from As. 12 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. The sugarcane mill has been already described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then removed and the pestle falls into a small hole in which the grain is placed. When only a small quantity of grain is to be husked a mortar (*gyle*) and pestle (*sekait* or *chia*) are employed. All of these implements are usually made by carpenters and purchased by the cultivator.

Storage and threshing of grain. The grain is threshed as soon as it is brought from the field, and stored either in a separate granary (*bhararghor*), or, more usually, in a part of one of the cultivator's houses which has been set apart for the purpose. It is

threshed by driving cattle round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk. The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to drop back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground till gradually the chaff is carried off.

The character of the rice crop depends more upon a suitable supply of water than upon the chemical constituents of the soil on which it is grown, and of water in Sylhet there is very seldom any scarcity. It is however, flood, not drought, that is the farmer's enemy, and the harvest often suffers from excessive and unseasonable rain. The different soils of the district have never been carefully examined, but the following kinds are recognised by the cultivator. *Domarua* or *domatiya* is composed of clay with a slight admixture of sand, and is well suited to the growth of double crops. *Athalu* is a heavy clayey soil on which *aman* is generally grown, while *chegua* contains a large proportion of decayed vegetable matter, and is found in low swampy ground. Rice planted on this soil at first does well but tends to produce more leaf than grain. *Balua*, a sandy soil found near the rivers which issue from the northern hills, is far from fertile, and *bhurburia*, a clay soil much broken up by worms, is thought to be more suitable for vegetables than for rice.

Serious damage is sometimes done to the growing crop by the insects which are called *khatra*, *loai*, *poka*, and *monu* (*leptocorisa acuta*). The *monu* is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rains drive it back into the jungles, and good results are obtained by lighting fires, of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *khatra* appears in April and May, the *loai* in May and June and the *poka* in November and December. Rain is wanted when sail is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *aus* and *aman*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown.

Yield and value of crops.

		lbs.
Sail	..	1,000
Aus	..	800
Aman	..	950
Boro	..	1,050
Mustard	..	450
Molasses	..	2,400

The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These

figures only represent a general mean, and, even in a normal year, there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average from Re. 1-4-0 to Re. 1-12-0 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sail*, *boro*, or *aman* is roughly from 25 to 35 rupees, and from an acre of *aus* from 20 to 30 rupees. For mustard the villagers generally get from Rs. 2-12 to Rs. 4 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth from 15 to 22 rupees. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place, and ranges from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 per maund. The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from Rs. 120 to Rs. 180.

There is very little, as yet, in the shape of intensive cultivation, the villagers do little or nothing to improve the character of the crop beyond selecting the best grain for seed, and manure is seldom used. Cowdung is scattered over the seedling beds and jute fields, and applied to garden crops, but large quantities of this excellent fertilizer are

General remarks.

allowed to go to waste. Sugarcane is often treated with oil cake, and, in parts of the district, the stubble and sods turned up by the plough are burned, and the ashes help to fertilize the soil. Mustard land also is enriched with the ashes of the jungle growing on it. As a general rule the peasant trusts to the heavy rainfall and to deposits of silt to do all that is required, and does not adopt either new methods or new staples. The cultivation of jute is, however, spreading, and in Madhabpur onions and potatoes are coming into favour. The majority of the farmers are small men, who have neither the means nor the knowledge which are requisite in the pioneer ; and little improvement can be looked for, unless Government or some of the larger zamindars are prepared to show the way. The system of giving advances on the standing crop is not much in vogue. An exception must be made in the case of jute, but the total area under this fibre is not large. In Karimganj small advances are sometimes given for mustard, linseed, cotton, and molasses, which are then sold to the creditor at a price a little below that ruling in the open market, but only a small share of the profits of the farmer are diverted by this channel into the pockets of the capitalist.

There are three varieties of buffalo in Sylhet, the
Live stock. Manipuri which comes from the state
Buffaloes. of that name, the Bangar which is
imported from other parts of India, and a hybrid formed
by crossing the other two. The Bangar, though a much
more satisfactory animal than the cow or bullock of

Sylhet, is inferior both in size and appearance to the hybrid, which again is not as fine an animal as a pure bred Manipuri.

Professional graziers are not so numerous as in the Assam Valley, the scarcity of pasture in the rains being no doubt a serious difficulty. There are some ten herds of buffaloes in the Dharmapasha thana on the extreme west of the Sunamganj subdivision, four in Fenchuganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Rajnagar, one or two in Matiganj and Karimganj, and fifteen or sixteen in the Hakaluki *haor*. Elsewhere the number of professional graziers is very small.

A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white and rich in fatty matters, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years, during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth, and a buffalo is not aged till it is twelve years old. Male buffaloes vary in price from Rs. 20 to Rs. 100, and cows from Rs. 30 to Rs. 120. The Bangar buffaloes are cheaper than the hybrids, and much less costly than the fine animals of Manipuri breed. The prices paid in the Jaintia Parganas are considerably higher than those prevailing in the west and south of the district.

The cattle of Sylhet are some of the sorriest of their kind, and are undersized, half starved, and not unfrequently diseased. Everything is left to that stern stepmother, Nature, from the time when the most active, and probably therefore the youngest, bull in the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, to the time when the progeny, worn out by semi-starvation and over work lies down to die. No attention is paid to breeding, cows and bulls alike exercise their reproductive powers at the earliest possible moment, and continue to do so without intermission. The parents of the calf are often close relations, and no attempt is ever made to effect any improvements in the stock. In cases of sickness remedies are seldom thought of, and the infected animal is allowed to mingle with the herd. The natural result is the production of a breed of undersized, weak, and miserable animals which are hardly strong enough to drag even the small native plough. Bullocks and cows alike are said to cost from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50, but it is very seldom that the higher price is paid. Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 is the more usual figure and the animals are generally dear at that.

In the Sunamganj subdivision, there is excellent grazing to be obtained in the cold weather when the floods drain off from the marshes, but during the rains the condition of the live stock is far from satisfactory. Nearly the whole of the country goes under water, and the cattle have to be kept in the immediate neighbourhood of the homestead and are fed on reeds and coarse grass, brought in boats from the higher ground at the foot of the hills, or on

aquatic plants and grass pulled from the bottom of the *jhils*. Rice straw, it is said, is not very generally used, partly because the floods come on very soon after the reaping of the *boro* crop, partly because the straw decomposes very rapidly. In the Habiganj subdivision, the people graze their cattle on the Raghunandan and Satgaon hills, but the area available has been considerably decreased of recent years by the opening of tea gardens. In the north and west, there are marshes which afford excellent fodder in the dry season, but this part of the district is very densely peopled and the villagers are said to experience difficulty in obtaining food for their cattle in the rains. Grass and rice straw are stored against this time of scarcity, but the supply not unfrequently runs short, and thefts of fodder are said to be fairly common. The conditions in North Sylhet are very similar. In Karimganj there is a considerable area of high land on which the cattle can be grazed during the rains, and in the dry season the most excellent pasture can be obtained in the Hakaiki *haor*, and in other places, such as the Anair and Hanra Kuri *haors* and the Chapra and Medal *bils*. Rice Straw, as in other parts of the district, is stored for use in the rainy season, but at its best it is unsatisfactory fodder, and it is, perhaps, partly responsible for the poor condition of the Sylhetti cattle.

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent in the district are, foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea, diarrhoea (*marki*), cholera,

matikhoa, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or in a fortnight.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform, as a protection against jackals. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and the animals imported do not thrive. The total number in the district is extremely small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, stamina, or endurance. They have not in fact a single redeeming feature, and it is a matter for congratulation that their numbers are so small. European residents in Sylhet are compelled to obtain all their horse flesh from Calcutta.

Floods are one of the most serious difficulties with which agriculture is confronted, but they are of so regular and general a character that they are treated by the husbandman as part of the established course of nature. In the chapter on the history of the district reference has been already made to the destructive inundations at the end of the eighteenth century, to the attempts made to control these deluges by a system of embankments, and to the conclusion to which

the authorities were ultimately forced that they were engaged upon an absolutely hopeless enterprise. During the rains the north and west of Sunamganj is over-flowed by the waters of the various rivers that come down from the hills such as the Panatirtha, Maheskhal, Someshwari, Pinda, Kangsa, Surma, Kalni, Khasimara, Mugai and Piyain. The north and west of Habiganj are submerged by the floods of the Dhaleswari, Sutang, Balabhadra, and Khawai; and in Jaintia, the Lain, Goyain, Peein, Lubha and other streams inundate the low lying tracts. This is, however, only the fringe of marshy country which on three sides surrounds the higher and more fertile portions of the district. Though it must be admitted that floods occasionally do damage, it is obvious that the harm done in the more elevated tracts cannot be very serious or the district would not be able to support over 2,000,000 persons in a condition of comparative comfort. During the past twenty years, the floods of 1883, 1885, 1893, and 1897 have been unusually high, but no measures of relief were necessary.

Reference must now be made to one of the most important crops of the district, a crop
 Tea. which has attracted a considerable number of Europeans* to Sylhet, and has led to a large local expenditure of British capital. Tea is said to have been first discovered growing wild in the Assam Valley in 1823, and the first garden was opened, in Lakhimpur, in 1835. In 1855, wild tea was discovered in the Surma Valley, and the first garden was opened in Sylhet at

* The number of European planters in 1903 was : North Sylhet 15, Habiganj 26, South Sylhet 102, and Karimganj 51.

Malnichara in 1857. The progress of the industry was at first extremely slow, and the merits of Sylhet as a tea producing district were not recognised till comparatively late. The earliest figures available are those for 1868. In that year the area under tea cultivation was returned at 2,050 acres, and the outturn at 251,000 lbs. Even in 1884 the outturn was only 5,561,000 lbs, which was less than half the crop obtained in Cachar, Sibsagar, or Lakhimpur. A great change then took place, and both the area under cultivation and the outturn increased with remarkable rapidity. By 1893 the yield amounted to 20,627,000 lbs. which nearly equalled that of Sibsagar, the largest tea producing district in Assam. The upward tendency was maintained, and in 1900, there were 71,490 acres under plant, which yielded 35,042,000 lbs. of manufactured tea, which was more than 4,000,000 lbs. in excess of that produced in any other district in the Province.

Statistics for later years will be found in Table VI.

Labourers employed.	which shows the number of gardens in each subdivision, the area under tea, the outturn, and the labour force.
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Such local labour as is available for employment is generally unsatisfactory, and the coolies required for working the plantations have to be brought from other parts of India. In the ten years ending with 1890, the total number so imported was 71,950, and during the next decade it was nearly doubled and amounted to 141,650. The largest numbers imported in any given year were 26,450 in 1895 and 27,080 in 1896.

The following statement shows the locality from which the majority of these persons come. The climate of Sylhet is not unsuited to the natives of the United Provinces and planters are thus enabled to work their gardens with labourers who in Assam would quickly sicken and die. The coolies who are most difficult to procure, and who cannot, as a rule, be imported to Assam for less than a hundred rupees a head, are Sonthals and other jungly tribes from the Chota Nagpur plateau. Of them there are comparatively few, and one of the most important assets in the planter's favour in Sylhet is the fact that he can obtain his own labour at fairly moderate rates.

1901.	Number	Percentage.
Total	144,876	...
Chota Nagpur...	22,745	16
Other parts of Bengal	22,067	15
United Provinces	41,169	28
Central Provinces	12,681	9
Madras	10,079	7

The gross cost of importation is, however, large and few people would be willing to expend considerable sums of money in bringing up coolies to the district, without some guarantee that for a time, at any rate, they would be able to retain their services. This guarantee is afforded by Act XIII of 1859, which empowers a magistrate to order a man who has taken an advance of money on

account of work to be done by him, to complete his contract, and to punish him with imprisonment if he declines to carry out this order. The number of cases in which the coolie is actually confined is, however, small, and in 1903 only 13 deserters were punished with imprisonment, or less than one in every 10,000 of the labour force. It has already been remarked that the gardens of Sylhet are fairly healthy on the whole. Unfortunately the mortality is occasionally high on newly opened gardens, and amongst batches of new coolies, who often come up in a poor state of health, especially in times of famine, which is the very time when recruiting is most brisk. The average mortality amongst adult labourers in the ten years 1880-89 was 35 per mille, and in the next decade the rate was 37. During the past three years, (1900-03) it has not exceeded 25 per mille. 1897 was the most unhealthy year, with a death rate of 51 per mille. But this, after all, was no higher than the recorded mortality for the Province as a whole, which, thanks to the extremely defective agency for registration, was undoubtedly much below the mortality which actually occurred.

A friable red loam is that soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a well distributed and heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which in its natural state is covered with tree forest, is usually considered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is

deficient, but excellent results have been obtained in Sylhet from reclaimed marsh land. Most of these *bil* gardens are situated in the Langai valley, but they are also found in the valleys of the Juri or Sonai. Care is taken to select a piece of marsh land which is above flood level, and it is then thoroughly drained. This is a very expensive operation, and the mere drainage of a *bil* garden costs nearly as much as the complete opening out of an estate on higher land. The main drain is from 12 to 15 feet deep and as many wide, and every twelve yards it is joined by lateral drains. The yield is, however, unusually large, and these gardens have proved to be a very good investment in spite of the heavy initial expenditure entailed. The first *bil* garden was opened at Adamtila in 1878, and the largest gardens of this kind in Sylhet are Siphinjuri, Patni, Piplagul, Champabari, Tilbura, Chandkhira, Langai, and Sonakhira, all of which are situated in the Langai valley.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised—

Varieties of Plant.

Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width, Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety, Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances,

and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities, ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety. The best seed grown in Sylhet is obtained from the Lakatura garden. The price varies largely in accordance with the demand, and, of recent years, has ranged from Rs. 150 a maund prior to 1898 to Rs. 15 to 35 a maund in 1903.

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January, and kept under shade
System of Cultivation. till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot, to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year. Only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning and

2000
2000

any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. During the rains, the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It, also, adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes of temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are, however, sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is not unfrequently top dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view. *Matikalai* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*) is sometimes sown among the bushes and afterwards hoed in as a green manure.

Plucking begins in April and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a flush, and there are usually six or seven full flushes in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants.

The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account

of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 18 hours, but if it is cold and wet it may be 30 hours before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about 40 minutes, and after this the leaf is spread in a cool room for from 3 to 5 hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass, are orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, souchong, and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about

four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

Of recent years an attempt has been made to introduce the manufacture of green tea in order to meet the demands of the American market. In 1902, the Indian Tea Association offered a bounty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas on every pound of green tea manufactured. The following year this bounty was reduced by half, and over a million pounds of green tea were exported from Sylhet. The principal difference between the manufacture of green and black tea is that the former article is not fermented. As soon as the leaf comes in it is steamed in a drum for about half a minute, a process which turns it a bright green colour, and effectually stops all fermentation. Excess moisture is removed by a hydro-extractor or centrifugal machine, and it is then rolled, fired, and sorted into the following different grades, pinhead gunpowder, gunpowder, young hyson, hyson No. 1, hyson No. 2, twanky, and dust. The infused leaf should be of a bright green colour, and the liquor of a very pale yellow shade. Most of this tea is sent to North America, but a small quantity is sold in the mid-land counties of England.

The average yield per acre varies largely in different years and on different gardens, but **Output and Prices.** may usually be taken as at about 500 lbs. per acre. Since 1897, the lowest average was 412 lbs. in 1898, the highest 536 lbs. in the following year. Prices, of recent years, have been on the downward grade. In 1868, the Commissioners appointed to enquire

into the state and prospects of tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar, and Sylhet, reported that tea must fetch at least two shillings a pound if the industry was to be a profitable one. In 1887, the first year for which returns are available, Surma Valley teas fetched about As. 8 per lb. The price fluctuates considerably and in 1894 was as high as 8 annas 8 pie. It then began to fall, and in 1898 was only 5 annas, while in 1902, it was 4 annas 3 pie; but in the following year it was nearly an anna higher. The fall in price has, however, been accompanied by a great decrease in the cost of production, which is largely due, amongst other causes, to the increase in the average output. In 1872, the highest yield from any garden was 315 lbs per acre—thirty years later it was probably four times as large. Most of the tea gardens are situated on the low hills in the south of the Habiganj, South Sylhet, and Karimganj subdivisions. In South Sylhet they reach almost up to the Kusiara river, some distance to the north of Maulavi Bazar. In Appendix A will be found a table showing for each tea garden in the district, its gross area and the area under plant, the labour force, the names of the owners, and the distance from the garden to the nearest subdivisional head-quarters station.

In the Fifth Report submitted to Parliament in 1812 A. D. by the Select Committee
Forests. on the affairs of the East India Company it is said that Sylhet is chiefly productive in rice and cotton, but is of more importance from the natural growth of timber which is largely used for boat building. It is probable that, even at that time, Sylhet timber, like

Sylhet lime, was actually brought from places which were beyond the borders of the district, and, at the present day, though considerable quantities of forest produce pass from Sylhet into Bengal, most of it was grown in Cachar, Manipur and the Lushai and Tippera Hills.

The Sylhet state forests fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which cover an area of 103 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which, in 1902-03, covered an area of 179 square miles. Unclassed state forest is neither more nor less than 'waste land at the disposal of Government,' and does not of necessity possess the very smallest silvan characteristics. It may be a large swamp which goes under water in the rains and is totally destitute of trees, it may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former owner and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be, as its name suggests actual tree forest. In the case of Sylhet, the proportion of unclassified state forest which falls in the latter category is probably not large. Most of this unsettled Government waste is situated in the Jaintia Parganas, or in swamps and hills in the south of the district.

The management of the Government forests is generally entrusted to an Extra Assistant Conservator who has a sanctioned staff of 4 deputy rangers, 3 foresters, 17 head guards and 42 forest guards. Settlement holders in the Jaintia and Pratapgarh Parganas and the Langai-

Singla valleys are allowed to remove from unclassed state forests forest produce, other than reserved trees, free of charge, provided that it is for their own consumption and not for sale. Permits are also issued to traders for timber and other forest produce. On this a royalty is paid, the rates charged varying from one to four annas for every cubic foot of timber in the rough, or for every hundred bamboos. If the timber is situated in a reserve, the tree must not be felled till it has been marked by a forest officer deputed for the purpose. Timber or other forest produce is almost invariably removed by water, and ultimately reaches one or other of the revenue stations of the district.* Here it is measured up and assessed to royalty, which may be sent by postal order to the nearest treasury. On receipt of the treasury voucher, a pass is issued, and the owner is allowed to remove his property. Forest produce coming from private land is also stopped at these stations, but, on the production of a certificate of origin signed by the owner or his agent, a pass is issued for its removal.

The most valuable timber trees found in the district, which are largely used in the construction of houses and boats, are jarul or ajhar (*lagerstroemia reginæ*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), gundroi (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), kurta

Trees and trade in forest produce.

* The following are the revenue stations in Sylhet :—

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Patharkandi on the river Langai. | 7. Chhatak on the river Surma. |
| 2. Langai " " " | 8. Sunanganj " " " |
| 3. Silua " " Jui. | 9. Laurergar " " Panatirtha or |
| 4. Maulavi Bazar " " Manu. | Jadukata. |
| 5. Manumukh " " Kusiya. | 10. Muchikandi " " Khowai. |
| 6. Kanairghat " " Surma. | 11. Dinarpur " " Gopla. |

(*isonandra polyantha*), rata (*dysoxylum binectariferum*) and poma (*cedrela toona*). Simul (*bombax malabaricum*), am (*magnifera*), kadam (*anthocephalus cadamba*) and harish (*albizzia stipulata*) are converted into tea boxes. The trees are felled, sawn into logs about fifteen feet in length, and dragged by elephants to the nearest stream, down which they are floated to their destination. The principal centres of the timber trade are Patharkandi in the Langai valley, Karimganj, Sylhet, Moulavi Bazar, Habiganj, Bhanga, Ajmiriganj and Lakhai. The industry is not confined to any particular section of the community, but in North Sylhet most of the saw pits are the property of Muhammadans. From the figures given in Table VIII it will be seen that nearly all the fuel, and fully half the timber extracted from Government forests in Sylhet, is obtained from unclassified state forest. Minor products from which revenue is realized are bamboos, thatching grass, and grazing. Fees are levied on all animals grazed by professional herdsmen in the Hakaluki *haor*,* and the exclusive right to cut bamboos and thatching grass in the more inaccessible portions of the district is put up to auction.

The Langai forest, which is situated at the southern end of the Langai valley, between the
Reserved Forests. Pratapgarh and Pathariya hills, was originally constituted a reserve by notification No. 57, dated 17th September 1886. A portion of it was subsequently disforested, and revised boundaries, which include an area of some 80 square miles, were gazetted in notification No.

* The number affected is not very large. In 1902-03 fees were levied on 1,485 buffaloes, 1,146 cattle and 48 other animals.

3341 R., dated 13th September 1901. The greater part of this area consists of hilly country which slopes towards the river, interspersed with stretches of level land covered with high grass. The soil is a deep sandy loam which is rich in vegetable mould, and in addition to the trees already mentioned the following are found: Shundi (*mechelin* sp.), ping (*cynometra polyandra*), koroi (*albizzia procera*), karal (*dipterocarpus* sp), chatni (*alstonia scholaris*) and sitarjat (*echinocarpus tiliaceus*). Timber can be extracted without much difficulty, and floated down the Langai to the Kusiya, whence it can be distributed to every part of the district. The average annual receipts from this forest in the three years ending with 1902-03 were about Rs. 13,000. The Singla reserve adjoins the Langai on the east and resembles it in its general characteristics. It covers an area of 23 square miles, according to the boundaries laid down in Notification No. 3341 R., dated 13th September 1901. Timber felled in this reserve is floated down the Sonai, to the Kusiya, but from Table VII it appears that the average annual receipts, since the forest was formed into a separate reserve, have only been about Rs. 1,200.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Lime—Pottery—Brass and Bell-metal—Weaving—Boat building—Workers in wood—Carving and children's toys—Cane work—Other manufactures—Fishing—Lac.

The following is a list of the manufactures of Sylhet apart from tea : Slaked lime, **Manufactures.** pottery, brass and bell-metal utensils, cotton and silk cloths, boats, wooden articles and palanquins, children's toys, chessmen, jewellery, shell bracelets and inlaid iron work, iron and stone work, fire-works, *hookhas* and *titiyas*, mats, leaf umbrellas and fans, cane furniture, attar of agar, various kinds of oil, cane and bamboo baskets, cheese, *ghi*, and molasses.

Lime is brought from the quarries in the Khasi Hills and is burnt on either side of the **Lime.** Surma river from Chhatak to some distance below Sunamganj. A full account of the history of the industry will be found in the Gazetteer of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The process of manufacture is extremely simple. Big holes of the shape of an inverted cone and about ten feet deep are dug near the bank of the river. They are filled with stone which is piled up till the structure rises about five feet above the surface of the ground, and the upper portion is then covered with straw and plastered over with mud. A hole is left at the bottom facing the river, and a fire is built right underneath the centre of the pile of rock and

continuously fed with reeds for some twelve to fourteen days, till the stone is thoroughly calcined. A little water is then sprinkled over it and the lime is ready for the market. The importance of the industry may be judged from the fact that over two million maunds of lime and stone were exported from Sylhet in 1902-1903. The following figures give some idea of the cost of the different stages by which limestone cliffs in the Khasi Hills are converted into slaked lime at Calcutta.

The approximate charges for laying down 1,000 maunds of stone at Chhatak are—Quarrying Rs. 30; dynamite Rs. 2; trollying to river's bank Rs. 10; boating from Therria Ghat to Chhatak Rs. 50; and Government royalty Rs. 20.

One thousand maunds of stone at Chhatak fetch from Rs. 125 to Rs. 130, and the cost of burning is from Rs. 120 to Rs. 150. A Chhatak maund of stone weighs 102 lbs. and yields one *phera*, or about 92 lbs. of slaked lime. The cost of 1,000 nominal maunds of slaked lime at Chhatak is thus from Rs. 245 to Rs. 280, and the price is said to vary from Rs. 290 to Rs. 400. Freight to Calcutta is from Rs. 200 to Rs. 230 per 1,000 maunds.

Potters are either Hindus of the Kumar caste, or Muhammadans called Khuskis who are
Pottery. regarded with some contempt by the main body of their co-religionists. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff, some clean coarse sand is worked up with it,

and a well kneaded lump of the material is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun-dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a piece of hard earth called *balia* being held the while against the inner surface. It is again sun-dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work, while the final polishing is entrusted to the women, who sometimes mould small pots with their hands without employing the wheel. The instruments employed are the wheel (*chak*), which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*aihal*) a hollow basin about 16 inches long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, the mallet (*boila*) and the polisher (*chaki*). The principal articles manufactured are water jars (*kalash* or *kalsi*, *ghat* or *sarai*), cooking pots (*kachli*, *kurai* or *patil*), larger vessels such as *hari*, *matka*, or *jula*, smaller vessels such as *sara*, *kai*, and *kalki*, cups, plates, and lamps. The potters also make clay images of the various deities which are painted in bright colours and worshipped at the various festivals, and small models of elephants and other animals which are used as children's toys. This branch of their art is said to be distinctly lucrative. A few villages in Habiganj are famous for large, strong, earthen vessels which are used for storing molasses, and the cooking pots of Bengaduba in pargana Bejura, and of Lukra in pargana Richi are in some request. The profits

of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. Rough glazed earthen ware cups of European manufacture and plates and dishes of enamelled iron are also taking the place of the Sylhet pots and vessels.

The brass and bell-metal industry is not of much importance. Its principal centres are at the district and sub-divisional headquarters towns, and at Badarpur, Nandanpur, Madhabpur, Akhailkura and Srimangal, but only about a thousand persons are supported by this trade. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*nehai*, *thammua*, and *amti*), hammers, pincers and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut and the bellows are made of goats' skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pain*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pain* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured out of brass are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*, *bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi*), basins (*dabar*, *tagar*, *tasla*), and spoons (*hata*). From bell-metal are made lime boxes (*chunati*), cooking vessels (*ballai*), and cymbals (*kartal*).

Weaving is not practised as a home industry in Sylhet as it is in the Assam Valley, and the great mass of the rural population are dressed in the cheap fabrics of Manchester and not in home made cloth. The Jugi caste is strongly represented, but few of them now touch the loom, and such clothing as is produced is for the most part woven by Manipuris. In 1891, there were only 6,768 persons in the Surma Valley entirely supported by the weaving of cotton cloth, as distinguished from those who combined that occupation with agriculture, and, in 1901, there were only 5,009 persons in Sylhet whose principal means of maintenance was the loom. The whole question of weaving in this Province has been dealt with at great length in a monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam published at Calcutta by the Superintendent of Government Printing, 1897. The system followed in the Assam Valley is described on pages 30 to 51, and this is the system adopted by the Jugis on such occasions as they think fit to return to their traditional occupation, and occasionally also by the Manipuris. An alternative Manipuri process is described on pages 77 and 78. In the absence of elaborate plans and diagrams, descriptions of mechanical processes of this character are extremely difficult to follow, and those curious in the matter should refer to the monograph in question. Any one who really wishes to understand the way in which the work is done would, however, be well advised to study the subject in person and on the spot. The following is a brief description of the more important local products of the loom. The *than* or *gilap* is a large stout cloth made of white cotton thread, and

used in the cold weather as a warm wrap. The ordinary size is 9 feet by 4 feet 6 inches, but it is sometimes 18 feet and even 36 feet in length and is worn double. The price ranges from As. 8 to Rs. 3. Other articles turned out are *chadars* or wrappers, *dhotis* or waist cloths, handkerchiefs, and napkins. The *fanek* is a garment worn by Manipuri women, which is fastened under the arms above the bust, and reaches to a little below the knee. It is made of green or dark blue thread with red and yellow stripes, and is sometimes embroidered with flowers in cotton or silk. The price varies from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 7. The *khes* is a thick cloth either plain or striped, used as a coverlet for a bed, as a wrapper by men, and as a petticoat by women. *Kheses* are generally from 5 feet to 9 feet in length by 3 feet to 6 feet in breadth, and cost from As. 8 to Rs. 3. The Manipuris also weave cheap mosquito curtains which are sold for from As. 8 to Rs. 1-4-0 a set. Imported cotton thread is generally used, but the fact that at the last census 2,383 persons in Sylhet were shown as dependent upon spinning for their maintenance, indicates that the cotton grown in the hills is not neglected. Nearly all of these spinners, it need hardly be said, were women.

The eri silk worm is reared by Assamese immigrants who have settled at the foot of the
Eri silk. Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and by a few poor Namasudra widows, but the cloth produced is generally intended for home wear and very little comes to market. The worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the eri or castor-oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From 5 to 6 broods are usually

reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. When the female moths emerge they are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown, they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which are hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun, not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three-quarters of their weight in thread.

Boat building has always been an important industry in Sylhet. Mr. Lindsay, who was

Boat Building.

Collector there in 1780, built one ship of 400 tons burden, which drew 17 feet of water when fully loaded ; and experienced considerable difficulty in navigating her to the sea. He also built a fleet of 20 ships, and sent them to Madras loaded with rice, on the occasion of a scarcity in that Presidency. The following account of boat building in Sylhet is taken from an account submitted by Mr. Luttmann Johnson in his General Administration Report for 1880-81 : " The subdivision of Habiganj possesses at least two kinds of boats not

found elsewhere, the *Lakhai Palwar* and the *Khawai* boat. The *Khawai* boat is, however, only a flat-bottomed "*saranga*," the simplest development of the dug-out canoe. The bed of the *saranga* is simply a curved dug-out, on which the sides of the boat are built up. The more elaborate boats are built on the lines of an imaginary keel, the two ends or "*Galais*" of which are propped up at the beginning, in the places they will occupy when the boat is finished. Great quantities of keels and half finished boats of *Jarul* (*lagerstroemia reginae*) wood are made at Habiganj for sale at Phandauk Bazar in the Tippera district, where there is a great mart for timber. The "*Barki*" boat of Panduah, which plies in the river from Chhatak to Therriaghat, at the foot of the Kháisi Hills, is also peculiar to the district." It is, however, nothing more than a flat bottomed canoe, of very shallow draught, which is used for transporting limestone over the rapids in the hills. The boats built in the Bala-ganj quarter of the district are more spacious, as they are much wider than the Habiganj boats, though not so long.

The following account of the carpentry of Sylhet is taken from the same source : " Wood
Workers in wood. sawing is carried on in many parts of the district, specially at Bhanga, a place on the eastern border of the district, at the town of Sylhet, and at Habiganj. The sawyers generally come from the Habiganj subdivision. From the wood thus prepared, beams, rafts, and posts of houses are made, as well as platforms, bedsteads, benches, stools, wardrobes, desks, almirahs, chairs, tables, &c. Some of these are made after Calcutta

models. The wages of a carpenter vary from As. 8 to As. 12 a day. The carpenters also make agricultural implements, namely, the clodcrusher, the plough, and the yoke. The Manipuris make the wooden shoes, which are so universally worn by natives, and the *baulas* or pegs, which pass between the great toe and the toe next to it to prevent the sandal from slipping off the foot. These shoes and pegs are exported to some extent. Dhakadakshin, a pargana in the east of the district, is famous for the wooden plates, *khanchas* or *barkoses*, and vessels, *charis* or *tagaris*, made there." Palanquins are made at Lashkarpur, Rajnagar, Langla, and Chapghat.

The best carpenters are Manipuris. and they often
Carving and children's toys. enrich the boxes and bedsteads they turn out with a little carving. Carving in ivory used also at one time to be a speciality of Sylhet town, but the art has unfortunately become extinct. Excellent children's toys are made from common wood. A wooden spindle, called *dokan*, is supported on two uprights, and is encircled by a piece of leather whose two ends are alternately pulled and relaxed by one of the carpenters, so that the spindle rotates with great rapidity. A rough hewn piece of wood is inserted in the hole at one end of the spindle, and the second man applies his gouge or chisel, which is supported on a rest called *pholi*. As the wood revolves he deftly and quickly fashions a peg, bowl, cup, top, or similar toy, and when the article is shaped applies the colour. This is imported from Dacca or Calcutta, the colouring matter being mixed with resin or lac, and the whole being of the consistency of a stiff putty. It

is applied in bands as the toy revolves on the spindle, and polished with a dry leaf. This colour does not come off when moistened, a property which is most useful in the case of children's toys. The best kind of paint costs Rs. 6 per seer, but a cheaper and much inferior quality can be obtained for Rs. 3. Chisels and gouges which are made locally cost from As. 10 to Re. 1. The price of a set of 25 toys is Rs. 1-4, and the makers are able to live in quite as good a style as that of the ordinary cultivator.

The cane and bamboo furniture of Sylhet is cheap and of a good quality, a serviceable
Cane work. chair costing as little as As. 6. Really good cane baskets are also to be obtained in the bazar, and the leaf umbrellas of Sylhet are quite a speciality. They are made of what is known as *chatta putti* (*licuala peltata*) on a frame work of bamboo, but, though they only cost about three annas each, they are being ousted by the imported article which is more convenient, in that it can be closed, and lasts much longer. Mats are of several kinds, the best quality being the famous *sitalpati*, which is made from the *murta* reed (*maranta dichotoma*), and is valued for its coolness and smooth texture. The finest quality of *sitalpati* is manufactured in pargana Chaualis and commands a fancy price. The *neuli* mats, which are made of split bamboo, are almost as fine as a coarse *sitalpati*, and last a good deal longer. The best varieties of this mat are manufactured in pargana Chapghat, but bamboo mats are usually made of a much coarser quality. Mats are also made from *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), a high reed

which grows in marshy country ; the fine kinds, which are called *chatis* or *maluas*, are used to sit or sleep on, the coarser varieties, known as *dhara*, *katia* or *chas*, are used for partition walls in houses, and are sometimes laid upon the cow shed floor. There is a considerable export trade in mats, and nearly 140,000 maunds weight of these useful articles are said to have been sent out of the district in 1902-03.

Tikiyas are made of powdered charcoal and cowdung by poor widows and are used in *hookah* smoking. Short wooden *hookah* stems are manufactured in Sylhet, and so also is the flexible variety which is adorned with silver thread. *Sola* pith is made up into artificial flowers, ornaments, and crowns, and the red powder, *abir* or *fagua*, which is used at the Doljatra festival, is prepared in pargana Taraf. Oil is expressed from mustard, linseed, sesamum or *til*, radish, and the castor oil plant. Linseed oil is used to mix with paint, and *til* is generally taken medicinally. Radish when intended to be used for oil is sown very thickly, there is hardly any root, and the oil is expressed from the seed. It resembles mustard oil with which it is always mixed. Castor oil is used as food and also as a medicine for the itch. Oil is also extracted from the coal near the bed of the Panatirtha in the Sunamganj subdivision and is used as a remedy for skin diseases. *Patas* or stone pestles, and slabs used for pounding curry are made in Jaintia, and *daos* inlaid with gold at Rajnagar in the South Sylhet subdivision. *Ghi* and cheese are manufactured in Sunamganj and Nabiganj. Gold and silver ware is

manufactured, but the articles produced have no conspicuous merit. Many of the goldsmiths are Manipuris, but there are a certain number of Sylhettis, up-country men, and natives of Dacca, the last named being the most expert of all. There is one saw mill in the district at Bhanga Bazar, a station intermediate between Karimganj and Badarpur. In 1903, this mill gave employment to some 50 persons.

The fishing industry in Sylhet and is a source of no little revenue to Government. In 1902-03 the total receipts under this head amounted to Rs. 66,900, and were distributed as follows: Sunamganj Rs. 5,500; North Sylhet Rs. 26,600; Karimganj Rs. 20,100; South Sylhet Rs. 2,100; and Habiganj Rs. 12,600. Though the receipts from Sunamganj are comparatively small, it is the most important centre of the industry, as there are valuable fisheries in the permanently settled estates. The Subdivisional Officer estimates that as much as 500,000 maunds of dried fish are exported annually from this portion of the district. The fish are cut open, the viscera removed, and the flesh exposed to the sun on bamboo platforms. When dry fish oil is poured over them, and they are buried near the homestead till the time has come for despatching them to market. There is also a large trade in live fish, which, according to the Subdivisional Officer, amounts to some 100,000 maunds. They are carried to their destination in boats, the bottoms of which are filled with water which has to be changed every twelve hours. Fish oil, which is used as an illuminant in lamps,

is obtained by frying the viscera, and soaking the head and flesh in water, when the oil rises to the surface. There is not much export trade in fish from the other subdivisions except from the *Son bil* near Karimganj, whence fish is exported to Hailakandi; and from the *Hakaluki haor*, whence it is sent by rail to the North Cachar Hills. The castes who are engaged in the industry are the Mahimals, Namasudras or Chandals, Dom Patnis, Kaibarttas and Bhuinmalis. Members of the higher castes catch fish for their own consumption but not for sale.

Public fisheries are sold at auction to a middleman who makes the actual fishermen pay, either a fixed sum for each fishing house or village, or, more generally, a fixed sum for every net or trap employed. Typical rates are Rs. 30 for each *uthar jal*, Rs. 6 for a *jhuki* or *loya jal*, Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 for a *kheo jal*, Re. 1 for a *pelain*, and As. 4 for a *polo*, *hagra*, or other bamboo trap. In the *Hakaluki haor* Government levies a certain charge for each net or basket used, but in the channels leading to this and other *haors* there are regular fixed fisheries called *kheos*, which are openings cut in the jungle at right angles to the stream, in which a stake net can be placed. In the Jaintia Parganas many of the Government fisheries put up to auction are *bils* or swamps; elsewhere they are generally sections of the numerous rivers with which the country is intersected. The most valuable fishery is the *Hakaluki haor* which brings in a revenue to Government of from ten to eleven thousand rupees a year. In Habiganj fishing rights in $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles of the Kalni river, from

the Bibisana river to the Kusiya, fetch as much as Rs. 3,500 per annum, while a section of the Bibisana, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, was sold for Rs. 1,700. The Chatla *bil* in Karimganj fetches about Rs. 1,000. Most of the Government fishery revenue in North Sylhet is derived from the Jaintia Parganas. The best eating fish are hilsa (*clupea ilisha*), roe (*labeo rohita*), butchua (*eutropichthys vacha*), pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*), magur (*clarias magur*), kai (*anabas scandens*), katal (*catla buechanani*) and chital, soul and prawns.

The following are the nets most commonly in use :

Nets used. *Bhar Jal*.—Cost Rs. 16. A square net each side of which is about 24 feet in length. The two corners at one end are fastened a little above the water to two posts driven into the bed of the fishery 24 feet apart. The other end, to which ropes are attached, is allowed to sink in the water and is then drawn up with any fish that may have chanced to be swimming over the net at the time.

Dal Jal.—Cost Rs. 80 to Rs. 100. A stake net which is used to enclose a piece of water to which the fishes have been attracted by artificial cover formed from the boughs of trees.

Galfa or Ghona or Ber.—Cost Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. A net about 100 feet long and 10 feet deep which is allowed to float in a vertical position down stream, the top edge being buoyed by hollow bamboos. The fish, which swim faster than the net is floating, are caught in the meshes as they try to force their way through.

Ghatghati Jal.—Cost Rs. 10. This net is used by two men, each of whom takes one of the top corners in his left hand and ties the corresponding lower corner to his left foot. They walk out into the fishery till the net is in the form of a semi-circle, while their friends beat the water in the neighbourhood to drive the fish into the space enclosed. The men then meet and the fish are unable to escape.

Hefa Jal.—Cost Rs. 3 to Rs. 5. A triangle of bamboos filled with netting and fitted with a handle. It is used much as a shrimping net. The *pelain* is a smaller variety of this net and costs Re. 1. The *heka jal* is a net of the same kind used in rivers, and the *jhinti jal* one which is also used in *bils*.

Hera.—Cost Rs. 2 or Rs. 3. A rope which is used to catch the *ghagal* fish which always remains close to the bottom of the river or *bil*. The rope is dragged along the bottom, and the fish, when it feels it, retires before it and thus is guided towards the bank.

Hura Jal.—Cost Rs. 6 to Rs. 10. A long net, one end of which is tied to a post in a *bil* and the other held by the fisherman. He takes it out to its utmost limit and encloses a piece of water, catching all the fish which are inside.

Jhaki.—A flat circular piece of netting with a cord attached to the centre. The circumference is weighted with lead and the edge is turned up so as to form a series of deep pockets. The net is thrown so as to fall flat on the surface of the water, the weights pull the outer circle

down and together, and any fish inside are entangled in the pockets.

Khati.—A species of net or screen made of split bamboo and twine. A piece of water is enclosed by this net, which is then brought gradually towards the bank.

Kheo Jal or Shitkar.—Cost Rs. 4 to Rs. 8. A square net, the opposite corners of which are fastened together with pieces of bamboo. The net thus hangs like a sack from the pole to which it is attached, and is lowered into the water and raised again.

Maha Jal.—Cost Rs. 300 to Rs. 500. This net is something like the *galfa*, but instead of being allowed to drift down stream, it is arranged parallel to the bank and drawn towards it.

Sakubel.—Cost Rs. 20. A triangular net the two sides of which are fastened to two bamboos joined at the apex. A little above their junction the bamboos are fastened to two stout posts on which they work on a pivot, and the base of the net is allowed to sink into the water. Pressure is then applied to the apex and the net and its contents are raised into the air. The *sakubel* is a large net the two sides being about 48 feet long and the base some 24 feet.

Sanga.—Cost Rs. 2. A net like a large pocket, about 24 feet across. The mouth of the pocket is fitted with two bamboos to which cords are attached, and the net is sunk in the stream facing the current. As soon as a fish enters the pocket the man slackens the cord attached to the upper edge of the mouth and pulls the lower edge

upwards so that the pocket is closed. Smaller nets of the same shape are the *loya jal* and the *ilish jal*. They are kept nearer the surface of the water than the *sanga*.

Uthar Jal—Cost Rs. 80 to 125. A large kind of *jhaki* which is too big to throw and is gradually laid out from two boats. This net is made in meshes of different sizes, the largest size mesh is called *reg*, the next size *saphaya*, while the smallest of all is known as *bachaot*.

Fish are also caught in traps made of split bamboo, the doors of which open inwards so that the fish can shove them open from without, but cannot pull them open from within. They are of different shapes and are known as *kuin*, *bair*, or *dari*, *gui*, *paran* and *runga*. The *hagra* is a cone shaped wicker work basket open at one end only, and filled with brushwood in which small fish take shelter. It is sunk in the bed of the river and pulled up every twelve hours or so. The *chunga* is simply a hollow bamboo with holes in it, and is used in the same way as a *hagra*. Another device is the *datia* which is a split bamboo, the two ends of which are fastened in an insect and tied together with a piece of twine. The fish swallows the insect and the twine, the two ends of the bamboo spring apart, and the fish is unable to close its mouth. Another method of catching fish is to spear them at night with a trident called *attar*, when they are dazzled by the glare of a torch in the front of the boat. The ordinary fish spear is called *kucha*, but when the head is fastened by a piece of cord to the shaft and remains in the body

of the fish, it is known as *jhaqar*. Small fry are caught in the *polo*, a species of conical basket which the fisher dabs down before him as he walks along the *bil*. If he feels a fish inside he puts his hand in through the top and removes it. A long tube shaped basket used to catch the *kai* fish and worked on the same principle as the *polo* is called *jhupri*.

About 25 years ago lac was produced in considerable quantities, but the industry is now in a very languishing condition. The insect is reared on the banian (*ficus indica*), but, for reasons which the cultivators have not yet succeeded in discovering, it no longer thrives upon this tree. The only places in which it is now produced are parganas Bhaterah, Baramchal, Langla and Kanaihati in the South Sylhet subdivision. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE—COMMUNICATIONS— TRADE—TOWNS AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Subtenancy—Rates of rent—Rent law—Subtenancy in Jaintia—Subletting in the *ilam* estates—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Houses and furniture—Economic condition of people—Social restrictions—Railway—Navigable rivers—Boat traffic—Roads—Post and Telegraph—Trade—Towns—Local Boards.

There are no statistics of subtenancy available for the permanently settled portion of Sylhet, but the figures in the margin,

Subtenancy.		
Percentage of ordinary cultivating classes who were—		
	1901.	1891.
Landholders ..	39	34
Tenants ..	70	60
Cultivators unspecified ..	1	6

which are taken from the Census Reports of 1891 and 1901, suggest that more than half of the total area of the district is sublet. The bulk of the estates created at the time of the permanent settlement were so small that there has been no room for the growth of the intermediate tenures which are so common in Bengal. Many of the actual settlement-holders drive the plough themselves, while the others let their land direct to the cultivator, and from the rent he pays them satisfy the Government demand.

In spite of the density of the population rents as a rule are fairly low, the ordinary rates charged ranging from As. 12 to Rs. 6 per acre ; though good land in Habiganj and the most densely settled portions of the district will fetch as much as Rs. 12 or Rs. 15 per acre. The great majority of the landlords are small men, and have not the resources

Rate of rent.

or influence which would enable them to coerce refractory tenants ; and, though there is considerable pressure on the land, the difficulty of realizing the demand acts as an effectual check upon any tendency to rack renting.

The tenants are protected by Act VIII (B. C.) of 1869, which confers a right of occupancy upon any person who has held his land for a period of twelve years. The rent of such land is then not liable to enhancement, except on the ground that it is below the rate prevailing for similar land in the vicinity, that the value of the produce or the productive powers of the land have been increased otherwise than by the agency or at the expense of the raiyat, or that he holds a larger area than that for which he has hitherto been paying. The relations between landlord and tenant are said to be fairly satisfactory. The average number of suits annually instituted in Sylhet under the rent law during the four years ending with 1902 was 4,057, but the immense majority were for sums that did not exceed Rs. 50.

In the Jaintia Parganas, for which more accurate statistics are available, most of the cultivators hold direct from Government. At the settlement which took effect in 1896, it was found that out of a total settled area of 215,000 acres only a little more than 7 per cent. was held by subtenants, who formed a little less than 7 per cent. of the total population. These tenants fell into four classes. The majority paid rent in cash at rates which varied from Rs. 7-8 to As. 6 per acre of cultivated land. The

former rate is fairly high but from the small proportion of land sublet it seems fairly clear that the higher figure must be quite exceptional. Of the 8,104 subtenants only 268 paid rent in kind, the amount given to the landlord being usually less than one-third of the total produce. Other villagers, though the number is probably but small, hold their land either on a service tenure, or discharge their obligations partly in cash partly in labour.

The proportion of land sublet in the Ilam estates, the bulk of which are found in the **Subletting in the Ilam Estates.** South Sylhet and Karimganj subdivisions, is considerably higher. Out of a total area of 35,500 acres cultivated with ordinary crops nearly 42 per cent. is sublet, at rates varying from Rs. 8 to As. 6 per acre of rice land. Both of these are, however, exceptional rates, and the ordinary rent taken ranges from Rs. 2 to Rs. 3 per acre.

The labouring classes are for the most part recruited from the ranks of the humbler Hindu **Wages.** castes such as the Dom-Patnis, Malos, Namasudras, Malis, and Jugis, and the poorer Muhammadans, but even members of the Halwa Das caste will consent to act as ploughmen. Four annas a day appears to be the usual labourer's wage. The minimum is reached in Sunamganj, where men can sometimes be hired for 2½ annas, but, in all parts of the district, reapers at harvest time, house-builders, and load carriers are occasionally paid as much as As. 8 a day. In parts of the district there is a prejudice against carrying loads or

palkis for hire, and men who will plough and reap or help to build a house, object to being employed as beasts of burthen, in spite of the fact that for centuries all goods taken by land have been carried in this manner. There is a still stronger prejudice against working on the roads, and most of the repair work has to be entrusted to Nuniya coolies from Bengal. Servants are paid from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 4 a month with board and clothing, and if they feed themselves generally receive from Rs. 6 to Rs. 8 per mensem. Difficulty is said to be experienced in obtaining both servants and daily labourers, but, in comparison with the Assam Valley, Sylhet is well supplied with people ready and willing to work for hire. The proportion of the population of the district supported by general labour is, however, only 1 per cent. as compared with 7 per cent. in the neighbouring Province of Bengal.

Rice is the staple food crop of the district, but the price at which it sells is largely affected by the condition of the harvest in Bengal. In the early years of British rule, the market was liable to violent fluctuations. This was not due to the want of proper means of communication, as the waterways of Sylhet and Eastern Bengal were as good then as they are at the present day. But the same facilities did not exist for a foreign export trade or for the despatch of grain up-country, and, when there was a bumper harvest in Sylhet, there was doubtless little or no demand for rice in those districts of Bengal which were accessible by water. The lowest price recorded was in 1786, when rice was selling at the rate of four and a half maunds

Prices.

to the rupee, a price which hardly paid the cost of bringing it to market. Two years later it was up to Re. 1-8 a maund, but the normal price at the end of the eighteenth century seems to have been from 10 to 12 annas a maund for husked rice, and 5 to 6 annas for unhusked rice or paddy.

The last forty years have witnessed a steady rise in price, the average amount of common rice obtainable at Sylhet for a rupee during each of the four decades between 1863 and 1902 being 25 seers, 21 seers, 16 seers, and 13 seers. But though the general tendency has been upwards, the chart, like that of the thermometer at Quetta, shows the most violent oscillations. In 1864, the market rate was 31 seers, but two years later it had risen to 13. In 1872, it was back to 38 seers, but in 1879 it had jumped up to 11, only to fall again three years later to 37 seers for the rupee. Only once since 1882 has the price been less than Rs. 2 a maund, and this was in 1888. The highest rate on record was in 1897 when only 9 seers could be purchased for the rupee; the lowest in the last fifteen years was 1899 when the same sum brought in nearly 20 seers.

Communications on the whole are good, and the price of grain is fairly uniform throughout the district. The general tendency is for it to be highest in the South Sylhet and Karimganj subdivisions, where there is a considerable garden population, but this is merely a tendency and not an economic law, and rice is sometimes cheaper there

* Rise in price during past 40 years, but progress very irregular.

Prices fairly uniform.

than in Habiganj or North Sylhet. In May 1899, the price was recorded at twenty-four bazars in different parts of the district. The average was Rs. 2-2-1 a maund, and fifteen out of the twenty-four bazars were within two annas of this mean. The two extremes were Rs. 2-10-0 per maund at Durlabchara Bazar in Karimganj, and Rs. 1-11-6 per maund at Munshi Bazar in South Sylhet. Salt does not vary much in price from year to year. In the ten years ending with 1880, 8·7 seers were on the average procurable for one rupee. From 1882 to 1887, salt was cheap and the average for that decade was 11 seers; but the average for the next ten years dropped to 10·1. In 1902, 10·4 seers were procurable for a rupee. Pulse also does not vary very much in price, and since 1900 has kept fairly steady at 13 seers for the rupee.

The price of rice, salt, and pulse in 1900 and subsequent years will be found in Table IX.

The ordinary food of the villager is boiled rice, seasoned with spices or mixed with dal, or fish, or vegetable curry. Pigeons and ducks are occasionally eaten by the well-to-do, and in the west of the district rams are sometimes fattened for the table. The Muhammadans take fowl and, when they can afford it, beef. Cheese is sometimes eaten by the upper classes, and curds (*doi*) and fresh milk which has been coagulated by the addition of a little tamarind juice (*chhana*) are thought a dainty dish. Sweetmeats are made of flour or powdered rice mixed with *ghi* or oil, and sugar. Tea is comparatively seldom taken.

The clothing of an ordinary villager consists of a *dhoti* or waistcloth which costs 12 annas, and of which he will probably use four in the year, and two sheets which cost a rupee each. He also sometimes wears a small cotton coat which costs about 12 annas. A winter wrap costs Rs. 4 and lasts about two years, so that a man expends some seven or eight rupees each year upon his wardrobe. A woman wears a single garment—the *sari*, a long piece of cloth which is wrapped round the waist to form a petticoat and then thrown over the bust. It costs about 12 annas, and three or four are wanted every year. Amongst the upper classes chemises and bodices are coming into use, but the wife of a clerk can still dress on about eight rupees a year.

The cottage of the ordinary cultivator is built on a mud plinth, and the floor, though cool, is damp. The roof is of thatch, the walls of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the frame-work of the house of bamboo. There are no windows, and the interior of the hut, which in itself is small enough, is rendered additionally dark and stuffy by partition walls. The houses of the middle classes differ in quantity and quality but not in kind from those of the ordinary villager. While a poor peasant will content himself with a single hut his wealthier landlord will have five or six. They are larger and better built, timber posts are sometimes used in place of bamboo, and corrugated iron instead of thatch, but the principle remains the same. Masonry houses are extremely rare. The furniture of the villager consists of a wooden bed, a stool or two, and, if the man is fairly well-to-do, of

Houses and furni-
ture.

some wooden boxes and perhaps a chair. For bedding he has a dirty quilt made of old clothes, and his wardrobe is not distinguished either for the abundance or the excellence of his garments. Rough earthenware crockery of European manufacture and plates and dishes of enamelled metal are in common use. The poorer people sleep on a mat on the floor, but there are few houses in which a mosquito curtain is not to be found. Of actual poverty there is very little. The clothing of the cultivators though simple is all that is required at most seasons of the year, and there are probably few natives of the district who ever go in want of food. For the insanitary character of their homesteads the occupants are themselves chiefly to blame, and though there are few signs of wealth there is an equal absence of any evidence of grinding poverty.

The economic condition of the people is obviously a subject of much interest and importance, but it is one with regard to which it is extremely difficult to obtain information on which reliance can be placed. The peasant in Sylhet has no desire to minimise his obligations, or to pose as a prosperous and wealthy person, and the reports that are received largely reflect the personal idiosyncracies of the individuals consulted. Indebtedness is said to be extremely common. There are few areas in which less than one-fourth of the total population are said to be involved, and in the west of Habiganj, in the Baniyachung, Lakhai, and Madhabpur thanas, and in parts of Karimganj, practically all the people are described as being in debt. On the other hand

Economic condition of the people. Indebtedness and rate of interest.

in Muchikandi, adjoining Madhabpur, the proportion is reported to be as low as 25 per cent. It is true that this locality is less exposed to flood than Madhabpur, but it seems unlikely that there should be so marked a variation in the condition of the people inhabiting contiguous thanas, and there can be little doubt that these estimates of indebtedness must be received with a considerable degree of caution. In view of the high rate of wages paid for manual labour and the small proportion of labourers in Sylhet, it is not easy to believe that there is really much of genuine poverty. The rate of interest ranges from 18 to 75 per cent., the lower rates being charged on loans of considerable sums. When paddy is borrowed, the debtor undertakes to return double the amount or half as much again after the next crop has been harvested ; and, as the loan is generally made for but a short period, the rate of interest is very high. Marriage, *sradh* ceremonies, litigation, and the purchase of cattle are the causes which generally drive the peasant to the money-lender.

It must be admitted that in the north-western corner of the district the conditions are not altogether favourable. Almost the whole of the country goes under water in the rains, there are no tea gardens, and little demand for labour except in connection with the lime industry. The Superintendent of one of the largest zamindaries in Tahirpur describes the people of that quarter as being "the most miserable lot of wretches on God's earth." On this the native Magistrate remarks, that had this gentleman, who is a native of the extremely

Economic condition of Sunamganj somewhat unsatisfactory.

prosperous district of Backerganj, been acquainted with the condition of the peasantry in parts of Madras, Bihar or the Central Provinces, or, indeed, it may be added, in many parts of the world outside India, he would probably have couched his opinion in more moderate terms. The floods are so high in this portion of the district that the majority of the people depend on one rice crop, the *boro*, which is reaped before they rise. When the country is submerged a large portion of their time is devoted to the collection of fodder for their cattle which sometimes has to be brought from a considerable distance ; but, apart from this, they have little or nothing to do for a great portion of the year, and there can hardly be much prosperity where there is very little work.

The officer in charge of the Sunamganj police station states that it is unsafe to conclude that, because the lower orders decline to undertake menial work, they are necessarily well off. He draws a somewhat gloomy picture of their condition and describes them as " in need of almost all the necessaries of life, ill-fed, ill-clothed, and badly housed. They cannot stand against a single drought or failure of crop, and cannot undertake any work requiring even a small outlay, without applying for a loan. Yet their habitual laziness and race pride precludes them from doing work by which the people of other parts are raising their status before their eyes. They practically have no margin to enable them to struggle with success against even one season of scarcity, can perform no marriage or *sradh* without a loan, and cannot even purchase a pair of bullocks without going

to the usurer." This picture also would seem to be painted in too gloomy colours. Deficiency of food is practically unknown, their clothing though poor is not unsuited to the climate, and their dietary, though unattractive to the European palate, is what they apparently prefer.

In the Fenchuganj thana, it is said that the standard of comfort is higher than it was. Metal utensils have taken the place of earthenware, gold and silver ornaments are worn in place of lac and brass, carpet bags have come into use, and the leaf umbrella has been displaced by the product of the European factory. In South Sylhet and Karimganj, the great majority of the villagers are said to be in debt, but it is difficult to believe that the condition of the people is really quite as unsatisfactory as is alleged.

Little light is thrown on this important subject by the settlement reports. With regard to indebtedness in the Jaintia Parganas the Settlement Officer quotes Babu Prakash Chandra Datta who writes as follows :—

"The tales of indebtedness and living from hand to mouth in the statements recorded are common, but in most cases these are false and exaggerated, as strict enquiries have elicited, and are due to the peculiar fondness of Jaintia people to abstain as much they can from giving accurate information on matters in which they are interested. Of course, instances of real indebtedness are not wanting, as can be naturally expected, but the loans are generally contracted for marriages, religious ceremonies, for litigation, and rarely to buy cattle and to pay revenue. The majority of the real borrowers, it will be seen from the evidence recorded, are those who own larger areas

of land than are needed for their requirements or than they can cultivate, which they will not throw up, although obtaining no profit therefrom, because their forefathers held such an amount of land, and they will lose their prestige if they are to abandon it now ; or those who from a consideration of their social rank think it derogatory to work for hire when in need."

At the last resettlement of Ilam lands the Settlement Officer collected information with regard to the indebtedness of certain villages in the neighbourhood of Patharkandi. Here out of 393 householders 208 owed on the average Rs. 100 each, while in another village there were 81 debtors who owed altogether nearly Rs. 14,000 between them. Patharkandi is, however, situated in one of the less prosperous portions of the district, and it is difficult to believe that indebtedness is quite so prevalent or so serious in every part of the district as these figures would suggest, though the general impression of the native officers consulted is that it is very common.

As compared with the parts of India that are liable to famine the people of Sylhet are undoubtedly well off. The rainfall never fails, and, though a heavy flood occasionally does damage, the harvest is usually abundant and secure. Their surplus produce is sold direct to traders from Bengal, who can penetrate in their boats into almost every corner of the district, and there is no middleman to absorb a large share of the producer's profit. The villagers generally take three meals a day of cooked rice, and fish can be obtained without difficulty at all seasons of the year. They decline to work on tea gardens or on the roads, and actual poverty seems to be extremely rare. In some

General condition fairly satisfactory, though in some respects the Sylhetis are less fortunate than the Assamese.

respects, however, they compare unfavourably with the Assamese of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Their houses are better built, but owing partly to the scarcity of materials, partly to a dearth of land suitable for building sites, they have less room space per family than the Assamese. Silk, which is so common in Assam, is hardly ever worn by the cultivators in Sylhet, and such ornaments as they possess are in no way comparable to the costly locket and ear-rings of Jorhat. The houses are generally crowded together in uncomfortable proximity, and in the flooded thanas on the west fruit trees and garden produce are unknown. In the central portion of the district bamboos are plentiful, and there may be a mango or jack fruit tree and a few plantains, but there are no dense groves of betel nut, and vegetables, tobacco, and such like crops are not generally grown. Further south and east, the garden land improves, and the areca palms of Karimganj must be a source of considerable profit to their owners. Several causes operate prejudicially against the villager. In parts of the district there is a certain amount of pressure upon the land, and the people would be more prosperous were it possible for them to extend the area under cultivation. In Assam, the womenfolk of the ordinary peasant do most of the transplanting of the paddy, and help in the harvesting of the rice, and in their leisure moments fish, or weave on the loom enough clothing to satisfy the family requirements. In Sylhet, the women are not allowed to go abroad, and weaving as a domestic industry is practically unknown. The peasant's clothes have to be purchased with hard cash and are not as warm or durable as those worn in the valley of the Brahmaputra.

There are few restrictions on trade other than those imposed by the great law of caste.

Social restrictions on trade and agriculture. Dom-Patnis, Kaibarttas, Namasudras, Mirdhas, and Mahimals alone sell fish ;*

Sunris alone sell wine ; Jugis alone weave cloth ; Kumhars alone make pottery and so forth. In the Dharmapasha thana, in Sunamganj, Saturdays and Tuesdays are considered unlucky days for a first ploughing or for sowing seed, bamboos must not be cut on Sundays or cattle sold on Monday. On the other hand, further east in the Sunamganj thana, Tuesdays and Saturdays are said to be the best days for sowing *boro* seed, while Sundays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays are set aside for *aman*. Bamboos must not be cut on Sundays or Thursdays, houses built on Sundays, or money and paddy lent on the days of the new and full moon and the following days. In Baniyachung, people will not sell rice on Wednesdays and Sundays ; and the former day is considered by Muhammadans in most parts of the district to be unfavourable for any undertaking. All over the district, the last day of the month and the day of the new moon are considered inauspicious. In Jaintia, the villagers will not begin ploughing on Sundays or sowing on Mondays, or cut bamboos on Thursdays and Sundays, but in the eastern portion of the district less regard seems to be paid to inauspicious days.

There are four means by which goods are generally transported in Sylhet ; the railway, the steamer, the country boat, and the

Means of communication : Railways.

* In Madhabpur thana the Tiyars are the only caste who will sell anything less than whole fishes.

cooly. The cooly seems an anachronism as a beast of burthen, for the district has for the last twenty years been possessed of several hundred miles of excellent unmetalled roads, but, though the roads are there, the people have not yet realised the utility of carts. The Assam-Bengal Railway enters pargana Kasimnagar in the south-west corner of the district at mile 135 from Chittagong, and leaves it at Badarpur at mile 253. It skirts the Raghunandan hills, crosses the low ranges of Satgaon and Balisira, passes, like the river Manu, between the Rajkandi and Ita hills, and runs near the western base of the Langla and Pathariya hills northwards to Karimganj. From this point it keeps fairly close to the left bank of the Kusiara river till it reaches Badarpur, where the main line crosses the river, here known as the Barak, by a magnificent bridge, and turns north through the Assam Range into the Brahmaputra Valley. A branch line continues along the left bank of the river as far as Silchar. Work was begun on the railway in 1892 and the line was declared to be open for traffic as far as Silchar in 1899. The names of the stations going from west to east are Chandura at mile 137, Mantala at mile 142, Itakhola at mile 147, Shahji Bazar at mile 155, Saisitaganj at mile 160, Daragaon at mile 166, Rasidpur at mile 168, Satgaon at mile 175, Srimangal at mile 179, Alinagar at mile 187, Shamshernagar at mile 191, Tilagoan at mile 197, Kulaura at mile 205, Juri at mile 212, Dakhinbhag at mile 216, Barlekha at mile 222, Latu at mile 229, Langai at mile 238, Karimganj at mile 239, Chargola at mile 243, Bhanga at mile 247, and Badarpur at mile 252. The railway passes near many of the tea gardens and carries

a considerable proportion of the tea crop of the district. The stations from which the largest quantities are booked are Srimangal, Shamsheernagar, Langai, and Chorgola.

It has already been explained that the principal river of the district is the Barak, with its two main branches—the Surma and the Kusiya—the latter of which is again subdivided into the Bibiyana or Kalni and the Barak. The Kusiya arm is the route by which through traffic goes up the Surma Valley from Calcutta to Silchar, but the extent to which this river can be used depends upon the season of the year and the amount of water in the channel. During the rains big steamers come up from Calcutta and call at the following stations:—Ajmiriganj, Markhali, Enathganj, Sherpur, Manumukh for Maulavi Bazar, Balaganj, Fenchuganj, which is the company's headquarters in Sylhet, Nahair Ghat, Bairagi, Sheolamukh, Lakhi Bazar, Karimganj, Bhanga Bazar, and Badarpur. Small steamers run up the Surma from Markhali past Sunamganj and Chhatak to Sylhet town. In the cold weather, the big steamers go right up to Chhatak, but beyond that point there is not enough water in the Surma for steamer traffic during the dry season. Through traffic continues to go from Markhali to Silchar but small feeder steamers have to be employed. During the rains small steamers also run up the Manu to Chatlapur, up its tributary the Doloi to Kurma, and up the Langai from Karimganj to Langai Ghat.*

* These steamers are owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Co., whose managing agents are Messrs. Kilburn and Co., 4, Fairlie Place, Calcutta, and the Rivers Steam Navigation Co., whose agents are Messrs. McNeill and Co., 2-1, Clive Ghat Street, Calcutta.

In a district like Sylhet, where the fall is very slight and the current sluggish, it is inevitable that the rivers should silt up their beds. This process is apparently going on with greater rapidity in the Surma than the Kusiara. In 1872, a large shoal formed a little below Sylhet and for the next ten years the attention of the local authorities was directed towards the question of improving the through water communications of the district. The Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Luttmann-Johnson, made two trips up the Surma in a small steamer, and after a careful examination came to the conclusion that the river to open out was the Kusiara and not the Surma. The cost of clearing the latter stream would have been very heavy, and it was not the direct route for the through traffic to Cachar. *

The greater part of the trade of the district is, however, carried not by steamer but by country
Boat traffic. boat. During the rains the *haors* and channels are filled with water, and these lumbering vessels with their light draught are able to leave the regular rivers and take shorter and more expeditious routes across the country. From Lakhai they go straight to Habiganj and then turn north-east through the Gungijuri *haor* between the Barak and the Satgaon hills. At the northern end of this *haor* the traffic divides, and boats for Balaganj, the Manu, Karimganj, and Cachar, join the Barak just below Bahadurpur. From here to Balaganj the boats keep to the river, but between Balaganj and Karimganj there are numerous short cuts.

* *Vide* Deputy Commissioner's General Administration Report for 1880-81.

Boats going towards Sylhet leave the Gungijuri *haor* at Nabiganj, and travel due north to Enathganj and Haripur Bazars. From there they go by the Itakhola and Babna rivers, past Biswanath Bazar and Lala Bazar to Tukur Bazar, where they enter the Surma a little below Sylhet. The down traffic keeps of course more close to the rivers to get the benefit of the current, but the up traffic not only has the advantage of the short cuts outlined above, but generally also has the wind behind it.

In addition to the various navigable rivers, details for which are given in the statement appended to this chapter, there are two important channels which connect or nearly connect the Surma and the Kusiara. Except when the river is at its lowest, travellers from Cachar to Sylhet can avoid the Kanairghat loop of the Surma by proceeding down the Kusiara to a place about fifteen miles below Karimganj, which is connected by a navigable channel with the Surma. During the rainy season, too, it is possible to boat from Fenchuganj *via* the Korkuchi khal, the Hailka Barna *haor*, the Khesab khal, the Basudeb khal, and the Tola khal to a point about two miles south of Sylhet town.

Under native rule there was not a single high road in Sylhet, and the district depended on its numerous waterways for the transport of internal trade, and for communication with the outside world. Mr. Lodge reported in 1794 that the only roads in the districts were those in Sylhet town, which had been made by his predecessor at his own

Road system.

expense, and were kept in repair at Mr. Lodge's own cost. Since that date the condition of affairs has been completely altered and the district is now well supplied with highways, though during the rainy season journeys are generally made by boat. At the present day there are 120 miles of road maintained by the Public Works Department, and nearly 1,200 miles of main and secondary roads kept up by the Local Boards, details for which are shown in the following statement:—

Name of Local Board.	Mileage of main roads.	Mileage of secondary roads.	Cold weather tracks, &c.	Total.
North Sylhet ...	143	35	238	416
Sunamganj ...	29	16	.....	45
Habiganj ...	121	36	114	271
South Sylhet ...	155	118	.....	273
Karimganj ...	121	51	.....	172
Total ...	569	256	352	1,177

None of the main roads are metalled, but they are raised well above flood level, and as there is very little cart traffic, they are not much cut up even in the rainy season. The smaller rivers and streams are crossed by bridges, which are generally of a permanent or semi-per-

manent nature; though bamboo structures are still occasionally to be found and are always used on the cold weather roads. The larger rivers have to be crossed in ferry boats.

One of the principal thoroughfares is the road from Sylhet to Cachar which runs close to the left bank of the river Surma as far as Ramda, where it turns south to Karimganj and leaves the district at Badarpur forty miles from Sylhet town. This is, however, a new alignment and the old road, which is still kept in repair, kept close to the bank of the Surma the whole way from Churkhai to the junction of that river with the Kusiara. Both the old and the new road are fit for wheeled traffic throughout the year, and there are inspection bungalows at Golapganj, Ramda, and Sheolamukh at the 11th, 18th, and 23rd mile from Sylhet, and dak bungalows at Karimganj and Badarpur. Most of the bridges are of a permanent or semi-permanent character, but even in the dry season there are four ferries to be crossed—over the Surma at Sylhet, over the Kusiara at Sheolamukh and Karimganj, and again over the Surma at Katagang. Westward this road is continued to Sunamganj, a distance of 41 miles. It is fit for wheeled traffic during the cold weather as far as Govindganj, but in the rainy season goods and passengers alike go by the Surma river and local pedestrians alone are likely to use the highway. Inspection bungalows are maintained along this section of the road at Govindganj, Pagla, and Kaitak, which are situated on the 14th, 22nd, and 30th mile from Sylhet respectively.

North Sylhet
roads.

North of the town, a cart road runs 17 miles to Companyganj, crossing ferries at Salutiker, and at Companyganj where there is an inspection bungalow. Prior to the earthquake, a small railway ran from Companyganj to Therriaghat at the foot of the Khasi Hills ; but this line was wrecked by that terrible convulsion of nature, and there is now only a bridle path which is hardly fit for use during the rains. At this season of the year, travellers from Cherrapunji generally go by boat from Therriaghat to Chhatak, and thence by steamer to Sylhet. Another road runs north-west from Sylhet to Jaintiapur. As far as Haripur, where there is an inspection bungalow, 14 miles from Sylhet town, the road is drivable throughout the year, but here the level sinks, and for a length of about four miles the road goes under water in the rains. The total distance to Jaintiapur, where there is an inspection bungalow, is 26 miles, and from here there is a bridle path through Jowai to Shillong, a distance of 64 miles. From Jaintiapur a road runs past Kanairghat, where there is an inspection bungalow, till it meets the old Cachar road 29 miles from Sylhet. The total length of this road is 21 miles, and, at the fifth mile from Jaintiapur, another road runs eastward to the boundary of the district at Natwanpur and connects with a bridle path from Silchar. A driving road also runs from Sylhet, a distance of 23 miles, to Sherpur steamer station, in the south-west corner of the *sadr* subdivision. It was intended that this road should be met by a road to be constructed from Habiganj by the Local Board of that subdivision, but only four miles of the projected road are as yet completed.

Other roads in
North Sylhet.

There is an inspection bungalow at Tajpur, 15 miles from Sylhet, and also at Sherpur. Another inspection bungalow is situated at Dhakadakshin or Thakurbari, the home of Chaitanya's father, which is connected by a short branch road with the Sylhet-Cachar road at Golapganj.

A second main thoroughfare, 79 miles long, runs from Sylhet to Habiganj, through Fenchuganj, Kajaldhara, Srimangal, and Mirpur. There is a dak bungalow at Fenchuganj, where the road crosses the Surma river, and inspection bungalows at Srimangal and Mirpur. The subdivisional headquarters station at Maulavi Bazar is connected with this highway by a road running past Rajnagar to Kajaldhara, and thence past Hingajiya thana to the old Faticoolie guard in the hills; and by two other roads to Shamsdernagar and Srimangal, at both of which places there are stations on the Assam-Bengal Railway. These two roads are connected by a third which runs across the Balisira hills, and at Narainganj, on the Maulavi Bazar-Shamsdernagar road, another road turns south to Adampur. There is an inspection bungalow on this road a little to the south of the point where it crosses the Sylhet-Habiganj thoroughfare. Various minor roads run from the Maulavi Bazar-Kajaldhara road to the tea gardens in the Ita hills. A road also runs from Maulavi Bazar to Manumukh steamer station on the Kusiara river, where there is a dak bungalow. It is $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles long, but as the distance by river is very little longer, the latter route is generally preferred for journeys down stream.

The most important road in the Habiganj subdivision is the one that runs from
Habiganj roads.

Habiganj to the railway station at Saistaganj, the first section of which is part of the great semi-circular road from Habiganj to Sylhet. This road is continued from Saistaganj up the valley of the Khowai past Muchikandi, to Assampara 23½ miles from Habiganj. From Mirpur, which is situated on the Sylhet-Habiganj road, a little to the east of Saistaganj, a road runs past that place, Shahji Bazar, and Jagadishpur to Chakerghat in the extreme south-west corner of the district. From Jagadishpur a road runs west to Madhabpur, and from Surma a road runs east which joins the Muchikandi road a little north of that place, but part of it goes over private land. Another important road runs from Shahji Bazar past Lalchand to Laskarpur garden; and there are roads from Habiganj to the steamer station at Madna on the Dhaleswari river, and northwards to Baniyachung, but the two last are only open for traffic in the winter. From Mirpur a road runs past the Satgaon hills to Putijuri, a distance of 8 miles. There is a dak bungalow at Habiganj, and inspection bungalows at Mirpur, Shahji Bazar, Jagadishpur, Putijuri, Saistaganj railway station, Madna, Chunarughat, and Baniyachung.

The only regular road in the Sunamganj subdivision
Sunamganj. is the one to which reference has been already made which connects it with Sylhet, but in the cold weather there are tracks to Dharmapasha and Mullapara, with inspection bungalows at Sachna on the former and Mullapara on the latter route.

Apart from the old and the new alignment of the Sylhet Cachar road, the principal roads in Karimganj are those to Hingajiya and Oliviachara. The latter runs due south from Karimganj up the valley of the Langai past Nilambazar to Patharkandi. Here it crosses the Pratapgarh hills into the valley of the Sonai, or Chargola valley, as it is generally called, up which it runs to Oliviachara, 41 miles from Karimganj. There are inspection bungalows at Nilambazar on the 10th mile, at Patharkandi 10 miles further on, and at Dullabchara on the 34th mile. There are ferries at the 1st, 3rd, and 34th miles, but the rest of the road is furnished with substantial bridges. At Fakirhat a little to the west of Karimganj, a road branches off from the Sylhet-Cachar road and runs along the west of the Pathariya and Langla hills, past Latu, Shabazpur, Barlekha, Dakhinbhag, Kulaura, and Hingajiya to Duttgram, which is situated at the point where the Tippera boundary and the Manu meet. There are inspection bungalows at Barlekha on the 15th mile, and at Kulaura in the South Sylhet subdivision. This road is connected with the Langai valley road by roads that run across the Pathariya hills from Barlekha to Patharkandi, a distance of $13\frac{1}{2}$ miles and from Shabazpur to Nilambazar, a distance of 8 miles. A little to the south of Shabazpur, a road runs 5 miles west to Jaldhub, and thence 7 miles north to the Bairagi Bazar steamer station on the Kusiara. All of these roads, with the exception of the sections already mentioned, are raised above flood level and are open to wheeled traffic throughout the year.

The following statement shows what an enormous development of postal business there has been since 1861 :—

Number of Post Offices in 1903-04.	Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank accounts in		Balance at credit of the depositors.	
	1861-62	1870-71	1903-04	1871-72	1903-04	1871-72	1903-04
115	38	82	2,359	39	4,711	Rs. 16,000	Rs. 5,92,000

A list of post and telegraph offices will be found in the Appendix.

There is a considerable difference between the machinery of trade in Sylhet and in the Commerce & Trade :
 general remarks. Brahmaputra Valley. The Assamese have no commercial aptitude, and almost the whole of the trade of their country has passed into the hands of natives of Rajputana or Ajmer-Merwara. These enterprising merchants buy up the products of the valley and the adjacent hills, and despatch them by steamer to Calcutta, and by the same route they obtain the salt, oil, piece-goods, and other commodities which they retail to the villager or garden cooly. Trade is centralized in the hands of a single community, many of whose members are possessed of considerable influence and wealth, and are substantial merchants and not mere petty shop-keepers. The trade of Sylhet has been to a great extent retained in the hands of the natives of the district, and its profits

are more widely distributed than in Assam.* Traders from Bengal come up the rivers in the rains, and buy direct from the cultivators, either at the bazars, which are generally situated on the river's bank, or in the villages themselves. There are of course merchants at the principal centres, many of whom amass considerable fortunes, but they do not carry on their operations on such an extensive scale as do their confrères in the Assam Valley. Their shops are small and mean in comparison with the large masonry buildings in the bazars of Gauhati and Dibrugarh, and they lean more to the retail than the wholesale side of commerce.

The trade of the district is carried on with Cachar, the Khasi Hills, Hill Tippera, and Bengal. No attempt is made to register the trade with the first two districts, and that with Cachar is probably not large. From the Khasi Hills come potatoes, oranges, limestone, pan, bay leaves and cotton, which are carried down by coolies, who return with rice, dried fish, and oil. But the great bulk of these imports from the Khasi Hills, merely pass through the district of Sylhet and their ultimate destination is Calcutta.

The principal bazars are situated at the foot of the hills at Mulagul, Jaintiapur, Jafang, Lakhat, and Bhola-ganj. At the two latter places market dues are levied by the Khasi Siems of Cherra and Khyrim.

* The population of the Surma Valley was slightly larger than that of the Brahmaputra Valley in 1901, but it contained only 525 natives of Rajputana and Ajmer-Merwara as compared with 8,681 in the northern valley.

Trade from Hill Tippera comes down the Langai, Singla, Juri, Manu, and Khowai rivers, and is registered at Muchikandi in the Habiganj subdivision and at Nowakhali in South Sylhet.

The principal imports are timber, bamboos, and canes, raw cotton, and *til*. The statement in the margin shows the average annual value of each of these articles during the three years ending with 1903-04. The chief exports are dried fish worth some Rs. 20,000, cotton yarn and piece-goods, and tobacco, but the exports are small in comparison with the imports. This is only natural as Sylhet exports raw material and it is manufactured products that Hill Tippera requires. The trade is to some extent hampered by the heavy export duties charged by the Tippera authorities. Cleaned cotton has to pay as much as Rs. 4 per maund, *til* Rs. 1-6-0 per maund, and mustard As. 9 per maund. Duties are also levied on timber and other forest produce.

Sylhet exports to Bengal little but raw materials—the principal exports consisting of un-husked rice, tea, oil seeds, hides, bamboos and mats; and lime, oranges, and potatoes which come in the first place from the Khasi Hills. The chief imports are cotton piece-goods, salt, tobacco, sugar, and oil. The following statement shows the average weight of the principal imports and exports during the five years ending with March 31st, 1903.

Imports.		Ra.
(omitting thousands)		
Timber ..	..	217
Bamboos ..	..	90
Canes ..	..	12
Raw cotton ..	..	58
Til ..	..	25

Trade with Bengal.

Statement showing the Imports and Exports in maunds and numbers (thousands omitted).

Articles of import.	Average for 5 years ending 31st March 1903.	Articles of Export.	Average for 5 years ending 31st March 1903.
	Mds		Mds
Coal and coke ...	219	Bamboos ... No.	7,423
Cocoanuts ... No.	1,181	Coal and coke ...	10 (a)
Gram and pulse ...	189	Cotton ...	11
Metals ...	87	Hides and skins ...	17
Oils ...	211	Jute ...	24
Potatoes ...	35	Mats ...	138
Rice not in the husk ...	268	Oil seeds ...	106
Salt ...	284	Oranges ... No.	15,474
Spices ...	159	Provisions ...	93
Sugar ...	240	Rice in the husk ...	1,670
Tobacco ...	89	Rice not in the husk ...	200
Flour ...	30 (b)	Spices ...	28
Piece goods ...	42	Stone and lime ...	1,847
		Wood ...	11 (b)

(a) Figure for 1903.

(b) Average for 5 years.

Statistics of the weight of goods carried by railway and steamer are obtained from the companies concerned and can be accepted as correct. Boat traffic is registered at Bhairab Bazar, and it is only probable that the cargoes of boats that pass at night, or on days when the current is running strong and there is a fresh breeze blowing, are omitted from the registers. The recorded volume of trade is thus in all probability smaller than the actual quantity.

The great bulk of the trade is still carried by water, and in 1902-03 only 18 per cent. of the imports and 9 per cent. of the exports went by rail. A large proportion of the river borne trade is carried in country boats, which, though slow, are comparatively cheap. A

list of the principal rivers used for traffic is appended to this chapter.

The principal centres of trade in Sylhet are the district and subdivisional headquarters, Ajmiriganj, Balaganj, and Chhatak. **The district bazars.** Most of the business of the district is transacted at bazars which are generally situated on the banks of rivers. The villagers assemble at these places once or twice a week and exchange the products of their farms, and there are generally a few permanent shops which are kept open throughout the year. A list of these bazars will be found in Statement C. in the Appendix. Sylhet town, which is fairly typical of the larger centres, has two distinct bazars. The streets of the Bunder Bazar are not unlike some of the less important thoroughfares of Calcutta. There are rows of small mean shops in which the would be purchaser can obtain such things as piece-goods, clothes of all sorts and kinds, stationery, enamelled cups and saucers, *hukkas*, umbrellas, lamps, candles, buttons and general haberdashery, iron pots and pans, steel trunks, furniture of wood and wickerwork, and different sorts of bangles. There are in addition two or three shops which cater for the wants of the European community and a vendor of imported liquor. In the Kazi Bazar the staple articles of trade are various kinds of grain, vegetables, spices, tobacco, molasses, mats, pottery, and kerosine oil.

The district contains only two urban areas in which municipal law is in force, *i. e.*, Sylhet and Habiganj. Sylhet was first

Municipalities:
Sylhet.

constituted a municipality under Act V. (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878. Act III. (B. C.) of 1884 was introduced in 1888. Habiganj was constituted a union under Act V. (B. C.) of 1876 in 1881.

The municipal committee of Sylhet consists of 15 members, of whom 10 are elected and 12 are non-officials, and they are presided over by a non-official chairman. The principal taxes imposed are (1) A tax on persons at the rate of $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent. of the annual incomes of the assessees ; (2) a tax on Government buildings at the rate of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the annual value ; and (3) a latrine tax at the rate of fifteen per cent. on the value of holdings ranging from Re. 1 to Rs. 12 in annual value, five per cent. for holdings with an annual value of between Rs. 13 and Rs. 100, four per cent. if the annual value is between Rs. 101 and Rs. 300, and three per cent. if it exceeds that sum. Sylhet is the largest town in the Province, but its income per head of population during the year 1902-03 was lower than that of any other urban area except Habiganj, Goalpara, and Barpeta. The incidence of taxation on persons was only As. 6-1 per head of population, a rate lower than that prevailing in any town in the Province except Habiganj, Nowgong, and Golaghat. The principal sources of income are the tax on persons and on Government buildings, the conservancy rate, and the tolls on ferries across the Surma, which are to a great extent paid by persons residing outside the municipality. The lowness of the assessment is not, it may be added, due to the want of objects upon which public funds might be suitably expended.

The affairs of Habiganj are managed by a Committee of five nominated members presided over by the Subdivisional Officer.

Habiganj.

The principal sources of income are pounds, ferries, a grant from the Local Board of Rs. 1,000, and a tax on persons. The latter item is practically the only portion of the public income that is drawn from the inhabitants of the union, and the incidence per head only amounts to As. 4-9. The people of Habiganj may thus look upon themselves as very lightly taxed. Details with regard to the principal items of expenditure and revenue in Sylhet and Habiganj in 1890-91 and 1900-01 will be found in Table XVI.

Sylhet town presents a rather mournful spectacle of general degeneration and decay. In the days of Muhammadan rule it must have been a place of some importance, and Mr. John Willes reports that the population at the time of the permanent settlement was 75,382. At first sight it would appear that he must have been referring to a much larger area than the town itself, as his predecessor, Mr. Lindsay, characterised it as "an inconsiderable bazar or market place." On the other hand, in 1809 A. D., the Collector proposed to impose a tax on all houses in the *kasbah* or town of Sylhet, of which he said that there were supposed to be some 31,220, all of which were apparently situated on the land on which no revenue had been assessed. In 1811, this assessment was imposed ; it was found that there were 10,098 houses, but the total amount of the tax assessed was only Rs. 926-0. Considerable

Sylhet Town.

opposition had been offered to the assessment, the householders had declined to supply the assessing officers with the information they required, and the shop-keepers had closed their shops. The assessment was, on the face of it, ridiculous. But the Collector did not seem disposed to press the point, and proposed, that as the tax had proved, as taxes always do, unpopular, and, as the demand was inconsiderable and out of all proportion to the cost of realisation, the matter might be dropped. In 1813, the Collector estimated the population of Sylhet town as 30,000 persons living within a circuit of two *koss*, i. e., four miles. The first regular census was taken in 1872 when the population was reported to be 16,846 souls. Since that date it has steadily declined, the figures being 1881, 14,407 ; 1891, 14,027 ; and 1901, 13,893, though in the latter year the total was swelled by the inclusion of some 500 workmen who were engaged in the reconstruction of the public buildings that had been demolished by the earthquake.

The town is situated on the north bank of the Surma, and, viewed from the river, **General appearance of town.** seems to consist of two bazars, the Kazi and the Bunder, with an open space in the centre, in which are situated the public offices. The Deputy Commissioners' house stands on the west side of a large tank, near the site which was formerly occupied by the bungalow of Mr. Thackeray, the first Resident of Sylhet, and is confronted by a long row of spacious but somewhat mean looking cutcherries. The Bunder Bazar consists of rows of small shops, in which piece-goods, clothes, and general haberdashery can be procured.

In the Kazi Bazar most of the merchants deal in grain and food stuffs, and their transactions are on a somewhat larger scale. It is here that markets are held on Mondays and Fridays to which the villagers bring their produce for disposal. The residential portion of the town lies back from the river, and its most striking characteristic is the dense jungle of bamboo in which the houses are almost invariably embedded. There are numerous roads, many of which are metalled and supplied with solid masonry bridges, but crumbling houses and deserted homesteads are evidence of a glory that has passed away. On every side are to be seen small mosques and the masonry tombs of dead Muhammadan saints, in whose honour lamps are still kindled at nightfall by the faithful. About a mile north of the river is the old polo ground, and the bells of arms which recall the time when a detachment of the Sylhet Light Infantry, whose headquarters were at Cherrapunji, was stationed in the town ; while close by is the famous mosque of Shah Jalal. It is in this quarter that most of the houses of the European residents are situated, on low hills from which a fine view is obtained over the surrounding plains, and it is here that the Idgarh has been built, a large masonry platform surrounded by brick walls, on which service is held on the occasion of the Ids.

The public buildings include the courts and offices of the Deputy Commissioner, the Judge, the Sub-judges and the Munsifs, a large jail, the Murarichand second grade college which has been founded and endowed by Raja Girish Chandra Rai, a Government high school, eight other

schools for boys and two for girls, a church, a dispensary and leper asylum, a town hall, and a public library. There are fourteen masonry wells in the town, but most of the people take their water from the river or from small tanks in the compounds of their houses. No less than twenty-four miles of unmetalled and eight miles of metalled road are maintained by the municipality, and as, owing to the extremely light incidence of municipal taxation, the funds at their disposal are not large, many of them are not in very good repair. The roads in Sylhet are rendered beautiful by the groves of graceful bamboos with which they are shaded on either side; but, apart from this, the town has a somewhat unkempt and desolate appearance, and there are no signs of flourishing trade, prosperity, or wealth. This, however, is but natural. In the days of Mughal rule it enjoyed the prestige which naturally attaches to the residence of a native official of some importance. It was the largest town on the frontier and was thus the centre of some trade. But with the opening up of Cachar and the development of the southern and eastern portion of the district, trade was naturally diverted to the more direct route along the Kusiya. The process was accelerated by the gradual silting up of the bed of the Surma and the enormous expansion of the tea industry both in Cachar and later on in the southern portion of Sylhet, which stimulated the growth of places like Balaganj and Karimganj.

The town of Habiganj stands at the confluence of the Barak and the Khowai in $24^{\circ} 23' \text{ N.}$ and $91^{\circ} 26' \text{ E.}$ Like most of the villages in this inundated tract it is built on the banks of the

rivers, which are raised a little above the level of the surrounding country. The public buildings and the residential quarter are situated on the left bank of the Khowai, but the most populous and wealthiest portion of the bazar is situated on the left bank of the Barak. There is a considerable trade, most of which goes by country boat. The principal imports are grain and pulse, cotton piece goods, kerosine and other oils, and salt. The chief exports are unhusked rice, jute, mustard, linseed, and hides. The majority of the merchants are natives of the district and members of the Shaha caste. The population of the town in 1901 was 5,236.

Sunamganj is a small town with only 3,530 inhabitants on the left bank of the Surma.

Sunamganj.

During the rains the whole of the country in the neighbourhood is submerged, and there is a fine view across this waste of waters to the Khasi Hills. The town practically consists of a single road along the river bank, and is altogether a most unprepossessing place.

Maulavi Bazar, the headquarters of the South Sylhet subdivision, has a population of 2,481

Maulavi Bazar.

persons. It consists of a small bazar on the left bank of the Manu. About a mile to the south, the subdivisional officer's bungalow and court and the subdivisional jail stand upon the northern slopes of the Balisira Hills, a tract of elevated rolling country which rises a few hundred feet above the level of the plain.

Karimganj, the capital of the subdivision of that name, stands on the left bank of the Kusiya river, in $24^{\circ} 52' N.$ and $92^{\circ} 2' E.$ There is a small bazar near the water's edge, but the place is favourably situated for the purposes of trade as, in addition to the facilities which it enjoys for water transport, the railway passes only a mile away to the south. The public offices and the bungalow of the Subdivisional Officer have been built on the summit of low hills ; and command a fine view of the blue ranges of North Cachar. The population of Karimganj in 1901 was 5,692.

There are other places which, though not worthy of the name of town, are still of sufficient importance to merit special mention. Ajmiriganj is situated in $24^{\circ} 33' N.$ and $91^{\circ} 15' E.$ on the banks of the Surma river, and in 1901 had a population of 583 persons. It is an important centre of trade, the chief exports being rice, dried fish, bamboos, and mats, and the imports, grain, oil, salt, tobacco, sugar, and piece-goods. Trade is carried on largely by country boat, though the village is a place of call for steamers.

Balaganj is situated in $24^{\circ} 39' N.$ and $91^{\circ} 50' E.$, on a narrow spit of land between the Kusiya and the Barbhanga rivers. It is little more than a mud bank, and is not even connected by road with any other place, but it is admirably situated for the purposes of water communication and is now the most important centre of trade in the Surma

Valley, with a large business in rice, mustard, linseed, jute, oil, *sitalpati* mats, and salt. The village is a place of call for river steamers, and a European firm has opened a warehouse for the sale of salt and oil.

Baniyachung is situated in $24^{\circ} 31' N.$ and $91^{\circ} 21' E.$

Baniyachung. It is the largest village in the Province, and in 1901 had a population of 28,883. It is said to have been founded in the first half of the 18th century by Abid Reza, the first of the converted Hindu Rajas of Laur, who submitted to pay tribute to the Mughals. The village contains a mosque of great local repute, a dispensary, a high school, two bazars, and about two hundred shops. It is surrounded by a moat and the houses are closely packed together on islets of high land separated from one another by marshy ground and watercourses.

Chhatak is situated in $25^{\circ} 2' N.$ and $91^{\circ} 40' E.$, on the left bank of the Surma river. The river is navigable by steamers up to this point all the year round, and there is a large export trade to Bengal in lime, potatoes, and oranges. A tall and massive masonry obelisk, erected in memory of Mr. Inglis, who founded a large business in lime, stands on the summit of a low hill, from which a magnificent view is obtained over river, swamp, and forest to the blue line of the Khasi Hills, which rise like a wall from the plains.* This obelisk was cracked in three places by the earthquake of 1897, and the pieces were wrenched round in

* An account of the Inglis family will be found in the Gazetteer of the Khasi Hills.

the same plane without being thrown down. The village is built along the left bank of the Surma, as in Sylhet the banks of the rivers are the highest part of the country.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. **Local Boards.** The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was, as before, entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and, in 1875-76, the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day.

The Deputy Commissioner is chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, but each of the other boards in the district is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, except a few main lines of traffic which have been retained under the direct management of the Public Works Department, with the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and with the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XV.

The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the Board surveyors.

The roads of Sylhet are of comparatively recent origin, and the great majority of them have been constructed by the various Local Boards. In South Sylhet the local authority has provided funds for the construction of 173 miles of road and 28 permanent bridges. In Karimganj 121 miles of road have been completed. The Habiganj Board, in addition to making many miles of road, has paid for 30 permanent and 22 semi-permanent bridges. The expression "paid for" is used advisedly, as, when the work presents any special engineering difficulties, it is generally entrusted to the Public Works Department for execution.

List of Navigable rivers in Sylhet.

NAME OF RIVER.	COURSE.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tons burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.				
Amirdin ...	Barak ...	Itakhola at Mandaruka ...	Not navigable ...	Throughout the entire length
Babua ...	Bahia ...	Itakhola ...	Do. ...	Do.
Bahia ...	Surma at Tukerbazar ...	Babua at Biswanath ...	Do. ...	Do.
Barbhanga ...	Barak at Moghul Bazar ...	Kusiyara at Balaganj ...	Do. ...	Do.
Betua ...	Bahia ...	Tolakhal ...	Do. ...	Do.
Charchandi ...	Bahia at Blewanath ...	Jamal Kata haor ...	Do. ...	Do.
Chengar Khal ...	Goyain ...	Surma at Kalaruka ...	Up to Goyainghat	Do.
Goyain ...	Hill at Jafiang ...	Chengarkhal at Goyainghat	Not navigable ...	Do.
Juri ...	Dharamnagar hills ...	Kusiyara at Fenchuganj	Up to Ghilachara	Entire length.
Kapna ...	Kusi ...	Jalu ...	Not navigable ...	Do.

List of Navigable rivers in Sylhet.—contd.

NAME OF RIVER.	COURSE.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tone burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.—contd.				
Katagang ...	Kusiyara ...	Surma ...	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Kusi ...	Kapua ...	Do.	Not navigable ..	Do.
Line ...	Khasi Hills ...	Shair ...	Do. ...	Do.
Peein ...	Do.	Surma near Chhatak ...	Up to Lakhat Bazar	Do.
Shair ...	Line ...	Chengarkhal at Goyainghat	Not navigable ...	Do.
SONAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.				
Chamtī ...	Mahaingh river near Nagdipur ...	Bheramuna ...	Up to Habibpur ...	Do.
Dakua ...	Rasulganj ...	Kamarkhali ...	Up to Rasulganj ...	Do.
Itakhola ...	Junction of the Babna and Awirdin at Mandaruka	Kusiyara near Katia	Up to Sibganj Bazar ..	Do.

Jadukata	..	Khasi Hills ...	...	Raktee ...	...	Not navigable ...	Up to Panatirtha Bazar.
Khasimara ...	...	Do.	...	Surma near Dwara Bazar	...	Do.	Throughout the whole length up to the foot of the hills.
Kahasingh ...	...	Dekar <i>haor</i>	...	Kamarkhal ...	...	Up to village Hasonpur situated on the southern side of Dekar <i>haor</i> ...	Entire length.
Mahishkhola ...	...	Khasi Hills ...	...	Someswari river near Madhyanager	...	Up to Ghilachuka	Up to Mahish khola Bazar.
Mara Surma ...	...	Surma near Nagadia	village ...	Bheramuna opposite Ajmiriganj Bazar	...	Up to Rajanager...	Entire length.
Painda ...	...	Surma at Painda ferry	...	Dhanu river...	...	Entire length ...	Do.
Piyain ...	...	Khasi Hills	...	Dhanu river in the Myensingh district	...	Up to Bhatipara	Up to the foot of the Laur hills.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.							
Balikhali ...	...	Barak ...	...	Ratna near Balakipur	...	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Bijna ...	...	Gopla ...	...	Barak near Tongirghat	...	Do.	Do.
Gopla ...	...	Hill Tippers	...	Barak near Jalalshap	...	Up to Matiganj ...	Up to the foot of the hills.

List of navigable Rivers in Sylhet—concl'd.

NAME OF RIVER.	COURSE.		Highest point which can be reached by boat of 4 tons burthen.	
	From	To	In the cold weather.	In the rains.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION—concl'd.				
Gungjuri ...	Gopla near Tarapasha ...	Bijua at Noakhali ...	Entire length ...	Entire length.
Karangi ...	Hill Tippera ...	Barak <i>via</i> Noakhali ...	Not navigable ...	Do.
Khowai ...	Do. ...	Barak near Habiganj ...	Up to Mashajan ...	Up to Ballabazar at the foot of the hills.
Ratna ...	Barak near Ujirpur ...	Barak near Bajuka ...	From Barak to Balikhali ...	From Barak to Khagaura.
Sonai ...	Hill Tippera ...	Titaish ...	Not navigable ...	Upwards to Mantala and some distance beyond.
Sutang ...	Do. ...	Dhaleswari near Lakhai ...	From Dhaleswari to Noagaon ...	Up to the village Lalchand.

SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.		...	...	Manu river near Chaudhury Bazar ...	...	Not navigable	...	Entire length up to the foot of the hills.
Dholai	...	...	Hill Tippera	...	...	Do.	...	Do.
Manu	...	...	Do.	...	Kusiyara at Manumukh ...	Do.	...	Do.
KARIMGANGJ SUBDIVISION.								
Kachua	...	...	Son bil	...	Kusiyara ...	Do.	...	Up to Son bil.
Langai *	...	...	Hills to the south of the Sylhet district	...	Hakaluki koor	Not navigable	...	Up to Hatikhira.
Singla	...	...	Lushai Hills	...	Son bil	Do.	...	Up to Dullab-chara.

* In the rains it is connected with the Kusiyara by the Natia Khal.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land Revenue—Early Settlements—The Permanent Settlement—The Hill Tracts—Temporarily settled estates—Deforestation—The Jaintia Parganas—Tea Land—Land revenue collection—Excise—Income-tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Administrative subdivisions—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Police—Chaukidars—Volunteering—Jails—Education—Medical—Leprosy Asylum—Surveys.

For the purposes of land revenue administration the district is divided into two distinct areas. Sylhet proper came into the possession of the Company when they acquired the *diwani* of Bengal in 1765, and a considerable portion of it was included in the permanent settlement; whereas the Jaintia Parganas were not annexed till 1835, and, like the rest of the Province, are temporarily settled.* Sylhet proper, again, is not a homogeneous tract, but scattered over the permanently settled area there are a large number of estates which were occupied and settled at various dates subsequent to the permanent settlement; while in the south of the district there were extensive tracts of jungle to which claims of a somewhat vague and dubious character were put forward by the neighbouring land-holders.

The whole history of the land revenue system of Sylhet is thus of a very complicated character, and cannot be adequately dealt with in the pages of a District Gazetteer. A more detailed account of the subject will

* Even in the Jaintia Parganas there are, however, 33 permanently settled estates.

be found in the Introduction to the Assam Land Revenue Manual, by Sir W. E. Ward, K. C. S. I., pages CXIII—CLVIII.

The earliest settlement of Sylhet proper was that made by Tudar Mall in 1582, and he is said to have assessed the revenue at Rs. 1,67,040.* This would, however, have been a rather heavy assessment in comparison with the demand of later years, and it is not probable that the whole of this amount was ever credited in the Imperial Treasury. In 1728, the land revenue actually paid to Government is said to have amounted to Rs. 70,076, and in 1787 Mr. Lindsay reported that it had never exceeded Rs. 1,25,000. In 1776, Mr. Holland assessed the district at about Rs. 2,00,000, and six years later it was farmed out at Rs. 2,50,000, but this amount could never be collected. A few years later Mr. Lindsay concluded his settlement for Rs. 1,87,500.†

Up to this time, the settlements seem to have been of a very tentative and temporary character, but in 1788 a step was taken which was destined to leave a permanent mark upon the district. In the cold weather of 1788-89 the Collector, Mr. Willes, commenced his measurements and settlements, and in August 1789 he reported that the work had been completed. He did not, as in most of the other districts of

* Principal Heads of the History and Statistics of the Dacca Division page 292.

† The revenue was actually assessed and paid in cowries, and in converting it into rupees four *kahons* of cowries have been taken to be equal to one rupee, but the rate of exchange varied considerably at different times.

Bengal, enter into engagements with the *chaudris* or land revenue collectors, but settlement was as a rule made direct with the actual cultivators of the soil. The total area covered by his operations was 2,100 square miles, and the character of a detailed settlement, which was carried out over such an extensive area in a single working season, can better be imagined than described. His work must, however, have been so frequently anathematised by his successors, that it is only fair to add that Mr. Willes was not a willing agent in the matter. He wrote somewhat plaintively on the subject to Government in 1790, and it is only fair that he should be heard in his own defence—"I shall first observe that the *hastabud* of the district did not originate with me.....had I consulted my own ease in preference to my duty I might have stated many plausible objections.....as soon as the rains would admit I entered on the disagreeable task, and in the execution of it I have received every possible opposition from the Kanungoes and other Mussalman inhabitants.....yet, gentlemen, I shall ever conceive it peculiarly unlucky that I should have been so unremittingly employed for a year on an object of so little import to Government, that any credit I might otherwise have obtained is lost in its insignificancy." *

Mr. Willes did not, moreover, anticipate that this extremely perfunctory settlement would be accepted as a

* Letter No. 119, dated 24-2-1790. The concluding paragraph recalls a similar complaint made by Col. Hopkinson, Commissioner of Assam, who in 1872, after carrying out the re-settlement of the valley, remarked in a letter to the Government of Bengal "I sometimes wonder whether it has often happened to an officer to have taken so large a part in proposing and realizing a measure fraught with such solid advantages to the state as that scheme secured, and to have obtained such scant thanks for it."

permanent engagement between Government and its tenants. Most settlements were at that time for comparatively short periods, and the Collector probably regarded the one carried out under his direction as a temporary makeshift.

He was fully conscious of the imperfections of his work, and for fear lest it might give rise to permanent and serious inconvenience, he caused most of the original documents to be destroyed. The only records in the Collector's office which bear Mr. Willes' signature are the *daul* and *talukwari* registers. The other papers bearing on the settlement were produced by the pargana patwaris in 1802, and are either duplicates prepared at the time of settlement, or unauthenticated copies of those duplicates, or possibly, for all we know, the creations of the patwaris' fancy. The *chittas* purport to show the boundary of each estate, but these boundaries are often of a vague and useless character, and some of the estates are simply said to be bounded by "hills" or "jungle."*

It soon became clear that there were extensive tracts of land which had never come within the purview of Mr. Willes' perfunctory operations, and in 1802 the Collector, under the orders of the Board of Revenue, directed the patwaris to furnish statements of these unsettled lands.

Permanently settled estates not included in Mr. Willes' settlement.

* A list of the records of the decennial settlement in the Sylhet Collectorate will be found in Deputy Commissioner's letter No. 4097, dated 27th August, 1879.

On receipt of these lists, notices (*ilams*) were issued calling on claimants and objectors to come forward. The Board then ordered the Collector to grant leases for the lands reported in the lists of the patwaris, and for other land found outside the boundaries of the permanently settled tract. These leases were issued between 1801 and 1807, and, though the term of settlement was not fixed, it was decided in 1869 to treat these lands as permanently settled. The lists of the patwaris were, however, very incomplete, and subsequent surveys have shown that the district contained nearly a million acres of land, in addition to the estates which had been surveyed and settled.* In 1817, the question of the settlement of these excess lands was again raised, and in 1834 it was decided that excess land, which had been included in the patwaris' *ilam* returns, and to which the rights of Government were undisputed, might be assessed. With regard to the remainder, it was decided in 1840 that they were not worth the trouble and expense of settlement.

Between 1859 and 1865, Sylhet came under the operations of the revenue survey, which is generally known as the *takbast*, as proprietors were then required to demarcate their estates with *taks* or marks.

This survey is of such importance that it is only right that the objects aimed at, and the methods by which it was hoped that they would be attained should be described in some detail. The following account is taken

* The calculation will be found on page CXXX of the introduction to the *Assam Land Revenue Manual*, Calcutta, 1896.

from a note recorded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, Assam, in 1892. The chief design of the survey of a district was to ascertain the position boundaries, and area of every village and estate in that district. In order to ascertain this, two parties went into the field, *viz.* (1) an unprofessional party under a special officer called the Superintendent of Survey aided by Deputy Collectors and an establishment of *peshkars* and *amins*, and (2) the professional party. The work assigned to the unprofessional party consisted in demarcating the boundaries of villages and estates, and settling boundary disputes, and the demarcation was required to be made a whole season in advance of the survey of the district to be undertaken by the professional party.

Before proceeding to demarcate the villages and estates of the district, the Superintendent of Survey received from the Collector lists of all such villages and estates in the district. These lists having been distributed among the several *amins*, to whom the work of demarcation was immediately entrusted, the *amins* proceeded to call upon the zamindars, raiyats, and other occupants of land to point out their boundaries, and, on the boundaries being pointed out, in all cases where the estates or villages given in the Collector's list could be traced, they were demarcated on the ground by *taks* or marks.

In carrying out the work of demarcation, the unprofessional party first laid down the village boundaries, and after that the position and boundaries of all estates having any lands in that village. They also prepared what are known as "*takbast* maps," most of which were on the

scale of 16 inches to the mile, which showed the boundaries not only of the village but also of every estate or portion of an estate included in it. The estates or portions of estates entitled to separate demarcation and entry in these maps are specified in sub-section 12 of section II, Chapter XXIII of the Board's Rules of 1866.

When a sufficient number of contiguous villages, with the estates or portions of estates contained in each village, had been demarcated, a *mujmili* or sketch map was prepared containing 80 to 100 square miles of country, and showing the names and relative positions of the villages which had been demarcated. The professional revenue surveyor then went to work, being guided entirely by the *taks* laid down by the unprofessional *amins*. He, however, confined himself solely to the external boundaries of villages. He had nothing to do with the internal details of villages, *i.e.*, the boundaries of estates or portions of estates beyond calculating the areas of those estates which the Superintendent of Survey sent him for triangulation. The professional maps, therefore, are village maps, showing geographical and topographical features.

The survey was never confirmed as required by section 4 of Act IX of 1847, and its accuracy has more than once been called in question. A test survey was accordingly carried out in 1881-1882, and the conclusion come to was that the original revenue survey, judged as a survey, was probably as accurate as such surveys usually are, but that the boundaries pointed out were in many cases

Takbast survey brings out great increase in permanently settled area.

wrong. The unprofessional party seem to have accepted without question or demur the boundaries pointed out by the proprietors, and it is hardly matter for surprise that there was found to be a large increase in the permanently settled area. These estates in Mr. Willes' day covered an area of 1,685,000 acres; but, on the completion of the *takbast*, the area was found to be 2,231,000 acres. In individual cases the increase was sometimes quite enormous, two of the most flagrant instances being Nos. $\frac{64}{47070}$ Faiz Muhammed and $\frac{73}{47079}$ Makanullah, in mauza Srichandanjum pargana Bhanugach. At the permanent settlement neither of these estates covered as much as three roods of land; the *takbast* allowed each of them 4,725 acres. At the same time, in the absence of any better record, the *takbast* maps are often accepted by the Civil Courts as evidence of boundaries, possession, and title.

In 1902-03, the permanently settled area in Sylhet was said to amount to 2,411,081 acres, classified under the following heads:—

Different kinds of permanently settled estates.

- (a) *Dassana*, i.e., estates included in the decennial settlement, which became permanent in 1793.
- (b) *Bazyafiti daimi*, i.e., invalid *lakhiraj* lands, resumed by the Special Commissioner appointed under Regulation III of 1828, and then permanently settled.
- (c) *Ilam daimi*, i.e., *ilam* lands permanently settled.
- (d) *Khas daimi*, i.e., permanently settled estates purchased by Government at sales for

arrears of revenue, and sold again as permanently settled.

- (e) *Halabadi, i.e.*, land which was not included in the decennial settlement, but which was settled without specifying the term of settlement, and was afterwards declared by Government in 1869 to be permanently settled.
- (f) *Khas halabadi, i.e.*, estates belonging to class (e), which, on being bought in by Government at sales for arrears of revenue, were subsequently permanently settled.
- (g) *Permanently settled waste land grants*.—The proprietors of three *halabadi* estates, paying a revenue of Rs. 9-5-3, claimed a large tract in the Raghunandan hills. Their claims were compromised by the grant in perpetuity of two estates, covering an area of 1,659 acres and paying a revenue of Rs. 9-6-0.
- (h) *Izad daimi, i.e.*, excess lands discovered after Mr. Willes' settlement, and then settled permanently.
- (i) *Haor mahal*.—Marshy land excluded from Mr. Willes' settlement and subsequently permanently settled.

Mr. Willes' system of settling direct with the cultivators had the natural result of creating an enormous number of separate holdings, from each of which a distinct and separate payment was required. According to Sir William Hunter, there were, in 1793, 26,393 estates on the rent

Subdivision of
estates.

roll held by 29,317 separate proprietors.* This in itself was bad enough, but by 1865 the number of permanently settled mahals had doubled, yet only one-fifth of them paid a revenue of five rupees or more. 22,000, or nearly one-half, paid a revenue of one rupee or less, the average demand on account of each estate being about $6\frac{1}{2}$ annas, while another 14,000 estates paid between two and three rupees.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the trouble of collection from such an enormous body of land-holders is out of all proportion to the amount of revenue received. In 1865, the Board of Revenue invited attention to the fact that no less than 437 peons had till recently been employed at *sadr*, and 71 persons, patwaris and others, in the *mofussil*, whose principal duty had been the collection of the revenues.† Such an establishment was not only a source of considerable expenditure to Government, but was a cause of harassment to the people, and it was proposed that proprietors of estates paying not more than one rupee should be allowed to permanently redeem their land revenue at twenty years' purchase. This proposal was sanctioned by the Government of Bengal,‡ but, strange to say, comparatively little advantage was taken of the concession.

In a country like India where the rate of interest is so high, it would not of course pay any one from the

Little advantage taken of concession authorising permanent redemption of the revenue assessed on small estates.

* A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II., p. 316.

† Letter No. 370-A., dated 23rd November 1865.

‡ Letter No. 2720, dated 8th July 1867.

strictly pecuniary point of view to redeem a fixed payment at twenty years' purchase, but the sums in question were so small that it was obviously to the interest of the proprietors to free themselves from the necessity of these petty annual payments, even at something above the strict market price. Possibly the orders were not generally known, or obstacles may have been thrown in the way of the people by the Collectorate staff, but, for some reason or another, only 2,414 estates had been redeemed at the time when the permission was withdrawn in 1880. For a time, also, a rule was in force under which the purchaser of a permanently settled estate sold at auction was compelled to redeem the revenue at twenty-five years' purchase, if it was not more than one rupee, but the number of estates redeemed under these orders was comparatively small. This concession was not, moreover, restricted to the permanently settled estates, but under Rule XI of the Ilam Rules of 1876, the revenue on temporarily settled estates could be redeemed at twenty-five years' purchase, provided that it was not more than one rupee per annum.

The ranges which project from the Tippera Hills into the Sylhet plain have been a fruitful source of litigation between Government and the zamindars. The names of these ranges and their estimated area is shewn in the statement in the margin, the order given being that from west to east. At the time of the permanent settlement these hills were for the most part covered with forest, bamboos, and scrub, in which the

The hill tracts.

Ranges	Area. sq. miles.
Raghunandan	.. 61
Batgaon	.. 106
Balisira	.. 115
Bhannagach and Ita	.. 68+80
Langla	.. 81
Pathariya	.. 47
Pratapgarh	.. 359
Siddheswar	.. 115
Total	.. 992

Tipperas would clear a patch of land, cultivate it for a few years, and then move on leaving their fields to relapse once more into the jungle from which they had originally been evolved. Certain rights of commonage are also said to have been enjoyed by the owners of the estates lying near the foot of the hills. These rights, which are known as *jhum*, a term which presumably implied the right to practise shifting cultivation in the hills, or possibly to tax plains men so practising it; *tippera*, or the right to levy a tax on Tippera villages; and *gurkati*, or the right to take or tax forest produce, are sometimes mentioned in the early records found in the collectorate as appertaining to certain permanently settled estates, and as having been assets which were taken into account when the revenue was originally fixed. There is also a fourth easement known as *panisikka*, but the very meaning of this term is lost, and, apart from the vexed question of the actual locality in which this right was to be exercised, no one at the present day has the very least idea what the privileges were which it conferred.

When it was found that the hill ranges possessed a special value of their own, in that they were excellently adapted for the cultivation of the tea plant, claims were, from time to time, put forward, to hold the land over which these easements had been assigned, as an integral part of a permanently settled estate. One of the most important of these claims is one which is known as the Balisira case, and which arose out of the action of the Maharaja of Hill Tippera, who, in 1882, entered into an agreement to lease 30,000 acres of land in the Balisira hills to

Messrs. Finlay, Muir & Co. The Maharaja was the proprietor of certain permanently settled estates in the Balisira pargana, to which these curious easement rights attached ; but there were 75 other estates in the same pargana which were in much the same condition, and Government denied that either the Maharaja or any other person was entitled to proprietary rights in the Balisira hills. In 1886, Government brought a civil suit against the Maharaja to establish their title to the 30,000 acres which formed the subject-matter of the suit ; but the case was never tried, and, in 1897, the matter was finally compromised, and the Maharaja withdrew his claims to ownership.

Difficulty was also experienced in giving leases to tea planters for land over which other persons exercised vague rights of commonage. A Regulation, known as the Jhum Regulation, was accordingly passed in 1891, extinguishing these claims, but providing for the payment of compensation to any persons who could show that they had legally exercised these rights within the twelve years preceding the passing of the Regulation. This measure in no way affected the interests of persons who could show that any portion of the hills had been actually included within the limits of their permanently settled estates, but the High Court have distinctly laid down that the possession of these easements is not in itself evidence that land over which they were to be exercised was permanently settled with the easement holders.*

* *Maulavi Muhammed Ali Amjad Khan v Secretary of State for India.* Judgment delivered on March 29th, 1904.

The temporarily settled estates are divided into the following classes :—

Temporarily settled estates.

- (1) *Ilam*.—This is by far the largest class. A history of the *ilam* settlements is given in the following paragraphs.
- (2) *Nankar patwarigiri, i.e.*, land formerly held free of revenue by the pargana patwaris as *nankar, i.e.*, in lieu of salary. The patwaris were abolished in 1838 and the lands brought under assessment.
- (3) *Charbharat, i.e., alluvial accretions*.—These, in Sylhet, are liable to assessment, but settlement must be offered to the owner of the property to which the lands are an accretion.
- (4) *Bilbharat, i.e.*, silted up beds of *bils* which were excluded from the permanent settlement because they were then useless.
- (5) *Izad, i.e.*, surplus lands discovered after the permanent settlement (but not formally proclaimed as the *ilam* lands were), and thus not included in it.
- (6) Revenue free land resumed because found to be held on invalid titles.
- (7) *Khas, i.e.*, permanently settled estates bought in by Government at sales for arrears of revenue and settled temporarily direct with the cultivators.

Theoretically the *ilam* estates are the lands which were included in the patwaris' returns in 1802, but were not settled under *halabadi pattas* prior to 1807. They are scattered all over the district, and in some parganas there are only two or three, and in many less than one hundred *bighas* of cultivated *ilam* land. Some of the estates consist of a small tank, or a few yards of cow path embedded in the middle of a permanently settled tract, and there are no less than 365 separate plots of *ilam* land embedded in permanently settled estates which have an area of less than five acres. The *ilam* lands were first measured up between 1829 and 1834, the total area reported being 229,950 acres. The first settlement was made in 1836 and was for ten years. All cultivated land was settled with the actual occupant, and on the expiry of the lease it was renewed at the same rates of revenue.

In 1871, steps were taken to effect a settlement in a more regular and detailed manner, and definite rules were laid down in 1876 for the guidance of the officers concerned. Cultivated and culturable uncultivated land were to be assessed at moderate rates, with reference to the rents paid by cultivators for similar land in the neighbourhood. From this assessment 15 per cent. was to be deducted, for expenses and risks of collection, and the remainder was taken to represent the Government revenue. Culturable uncultivated land in excess of one-fifth of the cultivated area was ordinarily to be excluded from settlement; but this provision was not enforced in the case of tea planters who had purchased

ilam leases, as it was recognised that a large proportion of a tea estate must of necessity remain uncropped. They were, however, required to pay revenue on all land under cultivation at the time of resettlement, and for waste equal to one-fifth of the cultivated area, at the same rates as those paid by cultivators for similar lands in the immediate neighbourhood. On the remaining waste the rates laid down in the 30 years lease rules of 1876 were imposed. Leases granted on these terms are described as leases issued under the modified *ilam* rules 1878, but all of them have now expired.

The classification adopted at the settlement begun in 1871 was needlessly elaborate. Cultivated land was divided into fourteen classes and uncultivated land into ten. There were for instance separate classes for homestead, for land adjoining the homestead on which bamboos were grown, for land on which betel or pan was grown, and for orchards or gardens. The maximum rates were actually as high as Rs. 8-4 an acre for sugarcane, and, whereas at the former settlement the average rate per acre of cultivated land was 11 annas 2 pie, it was now raised to nearly Rs. 1-12. The total area settled under the *ilam* and modified *ilam* rules, the *jangalburi* * and other similar rules, and the waste land rules of 1876, was 144,185 acres, of which 21,802 acres were cultivated. But even on the completion of this settlement there was still a considerable area of

* The *jangalburi* rules were issued by the Government of Bengal in 1864. Land could be granted under these rules for the cultivation of ordinary staples as well as of special crops at low but progressive rates of revenue.

waste land in the district which no one was willing to take up.

Some reference must now be made to the land which was included in the jurisdiction of the Pratapgarh tahsil, to which, prior to the *ilam* settlement of 1896, special treatment was accorded. This tract of country lies in the valleys of the Langai and Singla in the south of the Karimganj subdivision, and consists entirely of temporarily settled land, while only a small portion of it, towards the north, was included in the *takbast* survey.* The cultivated land was settled at the same time as the other *ilam* estates in 1859, and was included in the operations carried on by Maulvi Hamid Bakht between 1875 and 1878. Prior to this settlement the rates assessed had been extremely light. The land was situated in a remote and jungly portion of the district, extensions of cultivation were probably in most cases overlooked, and, according to the Deputy Commissioner, most of the cultivators were men who had a strong objection to paying rent, and who had deliberately migrated to this somewhat unattractive valley in the hope that they might thus evade the demands either of Government or landlord.

In spite of this the settlement officer did not hesitate to apply rates, which under the circumstances must be considered very high. On homestead land he imposed a revenue ranging from Rs. 3 to Rs. 3-12 per acre, and the charge for double cropped or garden land was very

* A considerable proportion of the Pratapgarh pargana is permanently settled. The jurisdiction of the tahsildar only extended to the temporarily settled estates.

little lower. The total revenue was suddenly raised from Rs. 3,600 to Rs. 11,800, and as a natural consequence the settlement broke down. In 1878, sanction was accorded to the establishment of a tahsil in this locality, and it was determined to collect the revenue direct from the cultivators, and, if this measure succeeded, to make a direct raiyatwari settlement. The rates were reduced and a fresh settlement was made which was extended till 1893. The temporarily settled portion of the pargana was then cadastrally surveyed, and a settlement made for five years to enable the tract to be included in the area covered by the operations of the *ilam* settlement officer. The Pratapgarh tahsil was abolished in 1894 and this tract is now treated like other *ilam* land.

Further interest attaches to this pargana from the fact that certain claims, known as *baban* and *rasad baban*, are put forward by the owners of some of the permanently settled estates to easements in the Dohaliya hills. This question is of too contentious and complicated a character to be discussed in the pages of a Gazetteer, and is of little interest to the general reader. Those concerned will find further information on this subject in a note by Mr. Cossins, C.S., dated June 25th, 1890.

The area included in the *ilam* settlement of 1896 fell into two broad classes, high land where the staple crop is *sail* or transplanted paddy, and low land on which *aman* is grown and which is liable to flood. These two main classes were again subdivided into better and worse, and the country was thus formed into four assessment classes or circles. Land was divided into homestead, rice land,

The *ilam* settle-
ment of 1896.

land growing other crops than rice, and waste; and in each circle there were two grades for each kind of land, except for rice for which there were three. There were thus 12 classes of rice land, and 8 classes of homestead, other crops, and waste. The rates assessed per acre varied from Rs. 2-10 to As. 15 for homestead, Rs. 2-7 to As. 9 for rice, Re. 1-11 to As. 9 for other crops, and from As. 6 to As. 1-6 for waste. The net result of the operations was that the revenue was raised from Rs. 1,17,785 to Rs. 1,66,112, an increase of Rs. 48,327. Only Rs. 17,258 of this increase was due to enhancement, and the remainder represented the revenue assessed on land which had been newly taken up.

The following statement which has been taken from the report submitted by the *ilam* settlement officer in 1903 shows the temporarily settled area of the district outside the Jaintia Parganas :—

Area of temporarily settled estates outside Jaintia.

Class of estates.				Acres.
1.	Modified <i>ilam</i>	...	...	23,713
2.	Ordinary „	...	...	108,350
3.	<i>Khas</i> estates	...	...	71,724
4.	Raiyatwari tract of Pratapgarh	...	...	22,595
5.	Resumed old rule grant	...	...	3,564
6.	Petty temporarily settled estates...	...	...	27,519
7.	<i>Jangalburi</i>	...	...	7,152
8.	Waste land grants	...	...	100,677
Total				365,294

The expressions modified and ordinary *ilam* have already been explained, and the former is now of purely academic interest as all leases issued under this tenure have expired. *Khas* land falls under two broad heads.

Part of it is what is generally known as Government waste, i.e., land which is too high or too low to be well adapted for cultivation, and which has never at any time been settled with any person. Part of it is composed of permanently settled estates which have been sold for arrears of revenue and bought in by Government. When an estate defaults in this way it is brought on the revenue records of the tahsil in which it is situated and a map is made of it. It is then visited every year by an *amin* or one of the tahsil staff, and, if any one is found in occupation, an annual lease is issued to him, and the land assessed to revenue. The rates imposed are the rates sanctioned for similar *ilam* land in the neighbourhood, or if the land is not fit for cultivation, the rates assessed on waste. The tahsil staff to whom these operations were entrusted were originally allowed considerable latitude with regard to the rates they may have thought proper to assess ; but from the statement in the

Tahsil	...	Area settled on annual lease in 1903- 1904.	Acres.
Bair	...	370	
South Sylhet	...	2022	
Habiganj	...	684	
Sunamganj	...	390	
Karimganj	...	242	
Hakaluki	...	300	

margin, which shows the area settled on annual lease in 1903-04 in each tahsil outside the Jaintia Parganas, it appears that the total area affected was inconsiderable. It is further fairly clear that, in a densely populated district like Sylhet, permanently settled estates which have failed to obtain a bid at auction, cannot have many attractions for the cultivator.

Most of the new land which is now being taken up for the first time outside the Jaintia Parganas is situated either in the hills, where there are still a few small patches of land

**Manner in which
land is at present
settled.**

suitable for rice cultivation which are called *chegs*; or in the *haors*, or great depressions which are gradually silting up, and in which cold weather crops are grown. When an application is received the land is first surveyed, unless it has been already mapped in the course of the *ilam* settlement, and a report is submitted showing in which of the four circles laid down at the last settlement it falls. It has already been pointed out that these circles do not consist of actual tracts of country bounded by a ring fence, but there is always other *ilam* land in close vicinity to the plot applied for, which guides the settlement officer in determining the circle to which the land should be assigned. The lease when sanctioned is for ten years, and the rate assessed on culturable land is Re. 1-2 an acre in Circle I and Annas 15 in Circle II, and, in both circles, Annas 6 an acre on waste. In the *haors*, i.e., Circles III and IV, the rates assessed are either Annas 6 or Annas 3 per acre. Land which is found in the possession of persons who have not formally applied for it is settled on annual lease. The area of *khas* land in each tahsil is unfortunately not known.

In the Jaintia Parganas land newly taken up is assessed at the lowest rates imposed on cultivated land in that particular village. In this portion of the district there is a genuine system of fluctuating cultivation, similar to that which prevails to such a great extent in Lower and Central Assam. Low land covered with reeds is taken up and planted out with summer rice or mustard, and after the second or third year is resigned. Annual leases are generally first issued, and, if the cultivator

**Settlement of new
land in Jaintia.**

decides to retain the land, a periodic lease, which terminates in the same year as the current settlement, is given to him. 1,120 acres were held on annual lease in the Kanairghat tahsil in 1903-04, and 5,219 acres in the Goyainghat tahsil.

Reference has been already made to the pressure of the people on the soil, and, to meet this very genuine demand for land, the upper valleys of the Langai and Singla, in the south of the Karimganj subdivision, which originally formed part of a reserved forest, were thrown open in 1898 and 1899. Much of the land was found to be unsuited for cultivation and the total area allotted by June 1902 was only 7,436 acres. The rates assessed were 15 annas an acre on flat and 3 annas an acre for hill land, but no revenue was charged for the first year of occupation.

The Jaintia Parganas are seventeen in number and cover an area of 484 square miles, or 310,000 acres; of which 214,500 acres are settled under one form of tenure or another, and 95,500 acres are waste. They are situated in the north-east corner of the district, and, with the exception of pargana Satbank, lie between the Surma river and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. They originally formed part of the territories of the Jaintia Raja, but were formally annexed in 1835, as the Raja declined to surrender the persons responsible for the murder of three British subjects who were sacrificed at the shrine of Kali in 1832. The revenue of the Raja was derived from

several heads. Land revenue was paid in kind or labour, fees were levied on appointments, and tolls on ghats, bazars, and fisheries, an item which was said to bring in about Rs. 8,800 per annum. Other sources of revenue were monopolies, presents, and fines. The total income of the Raja was estimated at from Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 30,000 per annum, and to this must be added the amount required to satisfy the demands of the subordinate officers through whose hands it passed.

In 1836, a summary settlement was concluded for one year by Captain Fisher.
Early Settlements. The revenue assessed amounted to Rs. 35,988, which was believed to be a fair equivalent of the amount taken by the Jaintia Raja. In 1838, the Parganas were resettled for a term of five years, and this settlement was subsequently extended up till 1856. During this period the rates were not raised but land taken up for cultivation was assessed, so that the revenue demand, which was Rs. 38,900 at the commencement of the term, was Rs. 42,800 in 1856. The rates assessed were very low and varied from one rupee an acre for the best kind of double cropped land, to 2 annas 6 pie an acre for waste.

In 1856, a settlement was made for twenty years, the revenue assessed being Rs. 54,443.
The Settlement of 1876. The rate for the best kind of rice land was not raised, but a small enhancement was imposed on most of the other kinds of land. The next settlement showed a very great increase. The rate for homestead was raised from 14 annas 9 pie to Rs. 1-14

an acre, and cultivation was assessed at Re. 1-5 per acre instead of at rates varying from 6 annas 3 pie to one rupee. The revenue, which by 1876 had risen to Rs. 61,900 owing to extensions of cultivation, was suddenly rushed up to Rs. 1,67,542, and as a natural result the settlement broke down. After much discussion it was decided to modify the rates in the less favourably situated villages, and the gross demand was reduced to Rs. 1,23,700, but, even then, it was almost exactly double the amount which had been previously exacted.

This settlement expired in March 31st, 1896, and two years later another settlement was concluded for a term of 15 years. ^{The current settlement.} The land was divided into four classes, homestead, rice fields, cultivation other than rice, and waste, and the villages were distributed into five different grades. The acreage rates assessed varied in the case of homestead from Rs. 2-10 to 12 annas, for rice land from Re. 1-14 to 12 annas, for land growing other crops from Re. 1-8 to 12 annas, and for waste from 6 annas to 3 annas. Land taken up for tea was assessed at Re. 1-14 for each acre under cultivation, and 6 annas an acre for waste. For the first five years of the settlement the increase in any village, whether due to enhancement of rates or extension of cultivation, was limited to 33 per cent. of the former revenue, and in the next five years to 66 per cent. The full assessment, when the enhancement exceeds 66 per cent., will only take effect in 1909. The total sanctioned assessment was Rs. 1,86,532, but the amount at first imposed was only Rs. 1,69,345.

Sylhet was one of the last districts in Assam to be exploited in the interests of the tea industry, and contains few estates held under the earlier rules which were framed to govern the grant of land for tea. One estate, covering an area of 1,837 acres, is held under the rules of 1854. One-fourth of the grant is exempted from assessment in perpetuity. The remaining three fourths had a revenue free period of fifteen years and were then assessed at 3 annas an acre for ten years, and at 6 annas an acre for seventy-four years more, the total period of the lease being thus ninety-nine years. Under the fee-simple rules issued in 1861, permission was accorded to the owners of lease-hold grants to convert their tenure into fee-simple by payment of twenty times the revenue at that time due. Only one grant, covering an area of 1,891 acres has, however, been redeemed. The great bulk of the tea land is held under the rules of 1876, which, after the passing of the Assam Land Revenue Regulation in 1886, were incorporated in a revised form as Section I of the Settlement Rules. The land was sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, and the lease runs for thirty years. For the first two years no revenue is assessed, it is then levied at the rate of 3 annas an acre for four years, and at 6 annas for four years more. For ten years it is 8 annas, and for the last ten years of the lease Re. 1 per acre. The issue of leases under these rules has been discontinued in Sylhet, and a considerable area of tea land is held on ordinary lease. The total area settled under different forms of tenure in the district will be found in Table XIII.

Land taken up
for tea.

Land revenue is paid in at the headquarters of each of the subdivisions, and at the Goyain-
Land revenue ghat and Kanairghat tahsils in Jaintia.
collection.

In the Jaintia Parganas the revenue from estates paying Rs. 50 or less is due in one instalment in May; other estates pay five-sixteenths of the demand in September and eleven-sixteenths in May. In case of default a notice of demand is issued, and if the amount due is not then paid up, the estate can be at once sold, without having recourse to the procedure in force in the other raiyotwari tracts of the Province, under which the land cannot be sold unless an attempt has first been made to realize the arrears by the attachment and sale of the movable property of the defaulter. The dates for payment in the rest of the district vary from April 30th to May 31st, but from estates paying more than Rs. 50, five-sixteenths of the instalment is due on September 30th. If a permanently settled estate falls into arrears, a notice is issued fixing the date of sale, which must not be less than thirty days from the date of the publication of the notice, and if the arrears are not paid up before the day fixed for the sale, it is forthwith knocked down to the highest bidder. In the case of temporarily settled estates outside the Jaintia Parganas the usual formalities of the issue of a notice of demand and the attachment of movable property must be complied with before the estate can be put up to sale.*

* It has recently (1905) been proposed to allow officers discretion to dispense with the notice of demand and to authorise the imposition of a fine not exceeding one rupee in cases of default.

In spite of the lightness of the land revenue demand, which in 1902-03 only amounted to 6 annas 3 pie per head of population, as compared with Rs. 2-7-1 per head in Sibsagar, considerable difficulty is experienced in recovering the lawful dues of the state. Notices of demand are freely issued, and in 1902-03 orders of attachment issued on no less than 13,244 estates, though the total for the whole Province was only 15,271. The amount of arrears for which property was sold in the Province was Rs. 47,618; and of this Rs. 36,835, or more than three-fourths of the whole, was contributed by Sylhet, though the district pays less than one-seventh of the land revenue of Assam. This difficulty in collecting the revenue is largely due to the system of joint ownership which is so prevalent in the district. It has been already shown that in the permanently settled area the revenue assessed on the great majority of estates is ridiculously small, and even these petty sums are due from several individuals and interests. It is frequently the case that, either from accident or design, one of the co-sharers fails to pay his quota, and the estate is accordingly attached and put up to auction. The very lightness of the land revenue assessment on the individual is no doubt in some degree responsible for the difficulty of realization, as people are often careless about the payment of small sums; and, as far as the issue of notices of demand is concerned, the comparison between Sylhet and Assam Proper is hardly fair. In Sylhet these notices are issued automatically as soon as an estate falls into arrears, whereas in Assam they are generally

only served upon persons who are notoriously unpunctual. Many persons also whose homes are situated at some distance from headquarters save themselves the trouble of coming in to pay their revenue by waiting till the arrival of a peon with an attachment order.

Some account has been already given of the early beginnings of excise administration in Sylhet, and of the insignificant amount of revenue obtained. In this respect the character of the district has changed but little during the last century, and, though it contains more than a third of the total population of the Province, it only contributed one-twelfth of the excise revenue in 1904.* About one-half of the revenue was obtained from ganja and two-fifths from country spirit. The greater part of the remainder was derived from opium.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods and generally in what is known as the closed still. The wash is placed in a large vessel beneath which a fire is kindled. The vapour rises into the still-head and then passes by two pipes into two receivers, which are cooled by water that is allowed to run over them, and thus cause the vapour to be precipitated in the form of spirit. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

* Province Rs. 30,24,000. Sylhet Rs. 2,61,000.

The material employed is either the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which
Material employed. contains a very large proportion of sugar, or molasses and rice. Mohwa is generally used by up-country distillers, and, as the foreigners, who form a large part of the liquor-drinking population, prefer the mohwa spirit, its use is spreading amongst the Sunris who formerly preferred molasses. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed, mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers; or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Susta*, the refuse wash which remains in the retort after the distillation, is sometime used in place of water. *Muli*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in large earthenware vessels, which, to economise space, are often sunk up to their necks in the floor of the shop. The larger vessels are cleansed before they are filled with wash by heating them with hot ashes or ropes of straw which are allowed to smoulder for some hours inside; smaller vessels are usually washed with water. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still. The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three-quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and, in the case of a brew of 30 seers of

mohwa, the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distill the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

From the statement in the margin it will be seen that of recent years there has been a considerable expansion of the revenue under the head of country spirits. This is chiefly due to the growth of the cooly population, most of whom are spirit drinkers, who increased more than fivefold, during the last twenty years of the nineteenth century. During this period, though there was a large increase in the liquor revenue, there was hardly any increase in the number of shops.

	No. of shops.	Revenue. Rs.
1872-74	38	7,689
1875-80	45	22,765
1885-90	66	42,746
1899-1900	48	1,10,665

The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, and its justification lies in the fact that where there are such facilities for illicit distillation and for smuggling, the only system possible is one which, by providing consumers with a moderately priced and reasonably accessible supply of spirit, lessens the temptation to resort to illegal methods to procure it. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing as far as possible the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

The shops for which the highest fees were paid in 1904-05 were Sylhet town, Bhadair Deol (in Kamalganj), Sharergaj and Ramnagar, both of which are in the Matiganj outpost, and Hingajiya. Table XIV shows the number of shops in each subdivision and the revenue obtained since 1900-01. By far the largest revenue is raised in South Sylhet, where there is a large immigrant population. A considerable proportion of the natives of Sylhet are, however, spirit drinkers, as is shewn by the receipts in Sunamganj, where there are very few foreigners, and in Habiganj where their number is not large.

Pachwai, or rice beer, is taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed.

Pachwai.

The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *muli* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are—5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *muli* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from pachwai or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot, with a hole in the bottom, is placed on the top of the vessel containing the pachwai and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spiritous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk. Madak
Opium. is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills.

The people of Sylhet are not much addicted to the use of opium, and the receipts under this head, which were never large, show a steady tendency to decrease. In 1881 they amounted to Rs. 43,700. The maximum of recent years was reached in 1886 (Rs. 47,400) but from that date onward they gradually declined till in 1902 they had sunk to Rs. 18,800.

The number of shops in each subdivision, the quantity of opium issued, and the revenue raised under this head are shown in Table XIV. Karimganj and North Sylhet are the only parts of the district in which opium is taken in appreciable quantities. In South Sylhet there is only one shop, which sells about ten seers a year; and in Habiganj the quantity consumed is well below one maund.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in the hills, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. Sylhet has always been rather a ganja-smoking district, and in 1884 the revenue raised from this drug in Sylhet amounted to more than half the total receipts from ganja in the Province. The receipts under this head of excise have kept fairly steady, as will be seen from the statement in the margin which shows the most violent fluctuations since 1881. The number of shops in each subdivision, the quantity of ganja issued, and the revenue obtained are

	Rs. (000 omitted)
1881	.. 102
1884	.. 121
1886	.. 68
1892	.. 126
1895	.. 99
1897	.. 128

shown in Table XIV. Unlike opium, the revenue obtained from ganja is fairly evenly distributed over most parts of the district, and the difference between the subdivisional receipts is small.

The receipts under the head of income tax in 1904 amounted to Rs. 53,619, or more than one-fifth of the total collections of the Province. About two-fifths of the whole were assessed on the salaries paid to garden managers and their staff ; and the salaries and pensions of Government servants also yielded over Rs. 6,000. Nearly half the total amount was, however, realized under Part IV "other sources of income," and there were altogether 638 assesseees under this head, or one in every 3,300 of the population. 266 of these persons were described as money-lenders, but most of these people in all probability combined money-lending with agriculture, and there were 68 assesseees in the professional class, nearly all of whom were pleaders. The assessment is made in each subdivision by a Sub-Deputy Collector or Extra Assistant Commissioner, who visits the principal villages and submits his proposals for the approval of the Deputy Commissioner.

The receipts from income tax have on the whole remained fairly steady, but it is doubtful whether there has been much increase in the taxable capacities of the people. In 1888, the receipts amounted to Rs. 61,000 and the maximum was reached in 1898 with Rs. 75,700. The marked decrease which occurred in 1904, and left the income tax demand lower than at any period since Act II of 1886 became law, was due to Act XI of 1903, which raised

the minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum. The consequence was that the assessment under Part IV was less by Rs. 10,000 in 1904 than it had been in 1888. A statement showing the receipts under this head will be found in Table XI.

The stamp revenue of Sylhet is large, judicial stamps yielding in 1904 Rs. 4,04,000, and non-judicial stamps Rs. 1,52,000, which in both cases was considerably more than half the total amount realized in the Province under this head of revenue. The incidence per head of population was 4 annas, as compared with 3 annas 4 pies per head in Cachar and 1 anna 11 pies in the Assam Valley. This higher incidence is chiefly due to a higher general level of intelligence. In the other districts in the plains the proportion of aboriginal tribesmen or of garden coolies is much greater than in Sylhet, and people of this class have seldom much occasion to attend our Courts. Trade, too, is more decentralized than in Assam where it is concentrated in the hands of a small and united community of Marwari merchants, who endeavour as far as possible to settle their disputes without paying fees to Government or pleaders. The potential number of litigants is thus larger than in other districts, and the complicated condition of the land tenure is a fruitful subject-matter of dispute. The receipts under the head of stamps in 1902 and subsequent years are shown in Table XI.

Public Works are in charge of an Executive Engineer or Assistant Engineer, who is usually assisted by four upper and three lower subordinates. The Public Works Department are

entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, circuit houses, dāk bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The most important lines of communication directly under the Department are the roads from Sylhet to Companyganj and Fenchuganj, the Cachar trunk road as far as Badarpur, and the roads from Habiganj and Maulavi Bazar to the railway stations at Saistaganj and Shamsbernagar. Since 1897, a large outlay has been incurred by the Department on the reconstruction of the Deputy Commissioner's and Judge's courts and the district jail. It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution.

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into five subdivisions. North
Government. Sylhet is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, Karimganj and South Sylhet are entrusted to assistant magistrates who are almost invariably Europeans, and Habiganj and Sunamganj to magistrates who are usually natives of India. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed four subordinate magistrates and three Sub-Deputy Collectors as his assistants at headquarters, and a second magistrate is usually posted at each of the subdivisional stations,

except at Habiganj where there are generally two magistrates in addition to the Subdivisional Officer. The total number of clerks employed under the Deputy Commissioner's orders in 1903 was 181 and they drew altogether from Government nearly Rs. 74,000 in salaries.

In spite of the fact that the district covered an area of nearly 5,500 square miles, a considerable part of which was very densely peopled, Sylhet remained for more than a century under British rule before any attempt was made to decentralize the administration. The question was first mooted in 1860, and it was then admitted that a million and three quarters of human beings could not be adequately governed if all the courts and all the superior officers engaged in the administration were located at one place. Sylhet, the capital of the district, was, moreover, somewhat inaccessible. There were, at that time, hardly any roads, and the difficulties of communication in the cold weather must have been very great ; while even in the rainy season access could only be obtained to the court of the Deputy Commissioner from some portions of the district after a long and tortuous voyage. In 1867, the district was subdivided by notification in the Gazette, into four minor units, *i.e.*, Sunamganj, Karimganj, Habiganj, and what now corresponds to, North and South Sylhet, but no less than ten years passed before effect was given to this order ; want of money being for some time an insuperable obstacle. The first subdivision was opened at Sunamganj in January 1877, and there was evidently,

Administrative
subdivisions.

even at that time, considerable financial stringency, as the Subdivisional Officer elect, who was a European, was informed that he could build himself a cutcherry and a comfortable dwelling house for at most Rs. 2,000 ! The sanctioned subdivisional establishment both here and at Habiganj and Karimganj, which were opened in the following year, were one Sheristadar on Rs. 50 per mensem, one clerk on Rs. 30 per mensem, four clerks on Rs. 20 per mensem, a potdar and a daftri each on Rs. 6 per mensem, and a chaprasi on Rs. 5. Subsequently it was found that the *sadr* subdivision was too large, and in 1882 a fifth subdivision was opened at Maulavi Bazar. The area and population of each subdivision is shewn in the statement in the margin.

	Area in square miles.	Population, 1901.
Sunamganj	1,492	433,753
North sylhet	1,055	463,477
Karimganj	1,048	410,460
South sylhet	840	379,188
Habiganj	999	565,001

The smaller unit of administration is the thana, of which there are 16. The area and population of each thana is shewn in Table II.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the decisions of magistrates of the second or third class, but the duty of hearing these appeals is sometimes delegated to the Subdivisional Officers of Karimganj, South Sylhet, and Habiganj, and to the senior assistant magistrate at *sadr*, who are specially empowered in this behalf. Appeals from first class magistrates lie to the District and Sessions Judge, who is subordinate to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were 16 stipendiary and 2 honorary magistrates in the district and two benches of

magistrates. These magistrates decided altogether 4,455 cases in the course of which 21,594 witnesses were examined. Altogether 5,634 cases under the Penal Code were returned as true, about four-fifths of which were either offences against property or against the human body.

In the chapter on the history of the district, reference has been already made to the unruly character of the inhabitants, and to the prevalence of river dacoity and agrarian riots in the early days of British rule. Unfortunately these characteristics still persist, and there is a marked tendency even at the present day to settle disputes arising out of the complicated land tenure by appeals to force. The matter is generally brought to a head by one party resisting the attempt of their opponents to seize the land or crops, and a curious case occurred in 1882 in which some villagers in the Jaintia Parganas deliberately decided to submit their claims to an ordeal by combat. The day and hour were fixed, and, in the course of the fight, two men were killed and many wounded. A few months later a date was fixed for a similar encounter, but on this occasion the police were informed of the intentions of the parties and intervened to prevent a breach of the peace.

These riots, as a rule, take place between the disputants for the land, but in 1900 the police themselves were attacked at Bhanubhil, near Kamalganj in the south of South Sylhet. Relations between the zamindar and his raiyats, most of whom were Manipuris, had for some time been strained, and a police guard was posted at the

zamindar's cutcherry to preserve the peace. On October 10th, two constables, two village chaukidars, and four zamindari peons who had been sent to enquire into the fate of a missing man, were seized by the villagers and severely beaten. Some of the accused persons absconded, and on October 17th a party of eight policemen, accompanied by three elephants belonging to the zamindar and about one hundred of his men, proceeded to the villages to arrest the guilty persons. On their arrival, they were confronted by a crowd of over a thousand people; and the head constable, who dismounted from his elephant to address the leaders of the mob, was assaulted with a club. The armed police fired their guns into the air, the zamindar's men fled, and the victorious villagers killed a mohurrir of the zamindar's cutcherry, mortally wounded another man, seriously injured seven of the police, and severely beat a number of other persons. The High Court subsequently confirmed the conviction of eleven of the men concerned in the two riots, and imposed sentences of imprisonment varying from seven to two years. Abidabad, Nabiganj, Dirai, Badla, and Astagram have an unenviable reputation for river dacoity.

The average number of murders and culpable homicides annually reported during the ten
Murders. years ending with 1889 was 24. In the next decade the average rose to 31, and during the past four years (1900-03) the average was 40. The largest number of cases occurred in 1901, when there were 48, or 1 to every 46,700 persons. This was nearly three times the rate prevailing in the Province of Bengal.

during that year, but is considerably lower than the rate for Lakhimpur in 1897, when there was one case for every 19,500 persons.

Most of these murders are due to quarrels about women, and not unfrequently the victim is a luckless wife, who, rightly or wrongly, is thought to be unfaithful. The great majority of these crimes are of a senseless and savage character, and the circumstances under which they are committed suggest that the murderer at the time was utterly bereft of sense. A typical case is one reported in 1882. A man abused his wife for neglecting to prepare his evening meal. The woman brooded over her wrongs, and when her husband composed himself to sleep, suddenly seized a *dao* and cut him about the head. She then murdered her infant child, and finished by cutting her own throat. The husband ultimately recovered, but two lives were sacrificed to a petty squabble about uncooked rice. A much more deliberate murder was committed in the following year by a party of Manipuris. A Muhammadan agent of a zamindar in the Muchikandi thana enticed away the wife of a Manipuri Brahman, and declined to give her up when called upon to do. Instead of applying to the magistrate for redress, the Manipuris held a panchayat, and decided that the Muhammadan should be killed as a punishment for seducing or at any rate harbouring a Brahman woman.* On the following morning, some two or three hundred of these people went to the zamindar's cutcherry, on

* In Manipur itself Manipuri women are extraordinarily lax, and adultery is looked upon as a venial fault and is often winked at by the husband.

pretence of having business with the agent. They succeeded in securing two guns which were in the office, and then arrested the object of their vengeance. He was carried out to the market place, mutilated in a horrible manner, and deliberately beaten to death in the presence of the people. The Manipuris then sent for two chaukidars, made over the body of the murdered man to one and his guns and property to the other, and called on them to bear witness that vengeance and not robbery had been their motive. It is satisfactory to know that for this cold-blooded murder and defiance of the law, one man was hung and thirty-three transported for life.

In 1900, a family murder was committed under very curious circumstances. A villager named Bir Singh, was so depressed at the death of his wife, and at the loss of a considerable sum of money which she had buried in a spot which she was unable to disclose before she died, that he determined to put an end to his own life and that of all his children. He accordingly sent away his sister who was mothering the orphaned baby, and arranged his children, who were aged seven, five and two-and-a-half years respectively, in a line, one behind another on the floor. He then sat down in front with the infant slung round his neck, placed the muzzle of his gun at his own heart and pressed the trigger with his toe. The result was the instantaneous death of himself and the two children sitting just behind, but though the bullet lodged in the body of the third child it was too spent to kill her. The infant alone escaped unhurt.

Civil justice is administered by the District Judge assisted by two subordinate judges and ten munsifs. Prior to 1896, there was only one subordinate judge, but an additional officer in that grade was sanctioned in that year as a temporary measure, and he was made permanent in 1903.

Civil Justice.

In 1902, the District Judge decided 12 original cases and 78 appeals, the subordinate judges 498 original cases and 447 appeals, and the munsifs 19,236 cases ; but out of the total number of cases disposed of in all courts only 3,554 were actually contested. In round figures these civil suits were classified as follows:—Money suits 12,000, rent suits 4,000, title suits 3,000. From the pecuniary point of view they cannot be described as of much importance as two-thirds of the total number were valued at Rs. 50 or less.

Sylhet is the only district in the Province in which there is much registration work. The Deputy Commissioner is District Registrar. Special sub-registrars are entertained at the district and subdivisional headquarters and rural sub-registrars at Balaganj, Kanairghat, Jagannathpur, Madhabpur, Jaldhub, Hingajiya, Patharkandi, and Baniyachung. The total number of documents registered in 1903 was 41,500.

Registration.

The Civil Police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 6 inspectors, 63 sub-inspectors, and 562 head constables and

Police.

constables. 213 smooth-bore Martinis are allotted to Sylhet and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and sub-divisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry.

In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, furnish guards and escorts, and serve all processes in warrant cases.

The district is divided into 31 investigating centres. The names of these stations and the number of men stationed at each centre will be found in Table XVIII.

There does not appear to have been anything in the shape of a village community in
The Chaukidars. Sylhet in the days of native rule, and there was at that time no village officer corresponding to the chaukidar. Chaukidars were apparently first appointed some time between 1818 and 1838, and in a report submitted in the latter year, they are referred to as a standing institution.*

No attempt seems to have been made to settle the boundaries of the village beats, and there does not appear to have been any efficient machinery for the realization of

* Magistrate's letter No. 263, dated April 1838, to Superintendent of Police.

the village policeman's pay. The natural result was that the force, if force it could be called, was in a very unsatisfactory state. In 1840, the Magistrate complained that the chaukidars could not be made the really efficient branch of the police force they were capable of becoming, until they were constituted the servants of Government and not of the village community.* In 1865, it was said that nothing could be worse than the condition of the rural police, who did not on the average receive more than Re. 1 per mensem. The whole question was taken up by Mr. Luttmann-Johnson when he assumed charge of the district in 1878, and, on his representation, Regulation I of 1883 was passed, to regularize and legalize the position of the village watch. Under this regulation the chaukidar may be paid in kind as well as in cash, he is left to make his own arrangements with the villagers as to the amount of pay he is to draw, and under ordinary circumstances he collects his salary himself. In cases of recalcitrancy the assistance of the magistrate can be invoked, and it is within the discretion of the Deputy Commissioner to appoint a panchayat to represent the villagers if he considers it desirable to do so.

In 1896, Mr. O'Brien, the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet, who was acting as Inspector-General of Police, reported that the regulation of 1883 had not worked satisfactorily in practice. The chaukidar, if he received his pay at all, neither received it regularly nor in full, he was entirely dependant on his fellow villagers, and

* Magistrate's No. 338, dated 13th April 1840, to Superintendent of Police.

was their instrument and tool and not a servant of the State. Act VI (B. C.) of 1870, was accordingly introduced in North Sylhet in 1898, and has since (1905) been extended to every part of the district. Under this Act the salary of the chaukidar is collected by a panchayat appointed for this purpose. It is then handed over to an officer, who, as a matter of fact, is usually the police officer in charge of the circle, by whom it is made over to the chaukidar. This system tends to improve the condition of the village watch by securing the regular payment of their wages, and at the same time places them more under the control of the police department. The total number of chaukidars employed in Sylhet in 1904 was 5,158, who were entertained at a cost of Rs. 2,67,000.

A Volunteer Corps was first enrolled in Sylhet in 1880 with a strength of 42 members, but was subsequently amalgamated with the Cachar volunteers to form the Surma Valley Light Horse. This admirable corps had a total strength in 1904 of 334 men, 178 of whom were residing in Sylhet.

The Sylhet Jail, which was reconstructed after the earthquake of 1897 at a cost of Rs. 1,86,000, is the largest and best ordered institution of that kind in the Province. The premises, which cover an area of 7·2 acres, are surrounded by a brick wall, and on one side there is a large garden enclosed by a bamboo palisade. The

principal sleeping wards, which are ten in number, are erected on high masonry plinths, the uprights are of iron, and the roof is made of corrugated sheets of the same metal. The walls are of whole bamboos, covered with bamboo shutters which can be raised or lowered at will; and the wards are thus warm in winter while in summer they are airy and cool. Two

of the wards are fitted with wire cubicles which can accommodate 186 prisoners and have been erected at a cost of Rs. 20,000. The number of persons who can be accommodated in the jail is shewn in the statement in the margin.

	M.	F.
Convicts ..	599	15
Under-trial ..	40	5
Hospital ..	55	2
Civil prisoners ..	5	0
Observation cells ..	5	0
Total ..	636	22

The water-supply is drawn from masonry wells, to one of which filtering beds and arrangements for boiling the water are attached, the total cost of the whole being over Rs. 6,000.

The prisoners are employed on gardening, weaving, carpentering, the manufacture of **Jail manufactures.** basket-work furniture and sieves, soorki-pounding, and oil-pressing. Bread and soda water are also manufactured in the jail. The cash earnings of the prisoners in 1903 were said to amount to Rs. 3,561, but this takes no account of the value of goods supplied to other jails, or of raw materials and manufactured articles in store.

The following statement shows the number of deaths that has occurred in each year **Health of Jail.** since 1883, in which the total number

of casualties exceeded ten, and the death-rate per mille on the daily average strength of convicts.

Year.	Daily average strength.	No. of deaths.	Death-rate per mille on the daily average strength.
1883	265	14	53
1884	214	17	79
1885	223	21	94
1886	177	22	124
1889	180	21	116
1891	139	28	201
1894	529	24	45
1895	479	39	81
1896	510	32	63
1897	533	21	39
1898	521	18	35
1899	512	32	63
1900	476	12	25
1901	509	17	33
1902	426	14	33

Between 1881 and 1892, it was the practice to house bodies of prisoners in temporary jails during the cold weather, and employ them on road construction under the Public Works Department. It was thought that change of scene and employment in the open would have a good effect upon their health, and after the system had been placed upon a proper footing this proved to be the case. At first there was some mortality due to the consumption of impure food and water while at work, and to over-exposure, but these defects were soon remedied. The prisoners were supplied with filtered water, prevented from obtaining unwholesome food, and on their return from work were provided with dry and warm clothing, with the result that, except for occasional outbreaks of cholera, the health in these jails was exceptionally good. The effect upon the statistics of

the Sylhet Jail was, however, very striking. Only the weakly prisoners were retained at *sadr*, and men whose health began to fail were sent back from the temporary jails, in some cases to recover, but in some to die. The enormous death-rate shown against 1891 appears to be an instance of the misleading character of statistics when improperly employed. No less than 20 of the 28 deaths occurred amongst prisoners who had returned from the Lushai Hills temporary jail. This temporary jail had a daily average population of 364 in the cold weather, but not a single death was debited against it. There was also a large temporary jail at Telikhal, which was chiefly manned by prisoners from Sylhet, and both of these two jails were omitted when calculating the average daily population and death-rate of the *sadr* jail. Even apart from this statistical confusion it must be admitted that the death-rate was occasionally most lamentably high. In 1895, the actual death-rate amounted to 81 per mille, which was characterised by the Chief Commissioner as appalling, and led to the issue of stringent regulation for the protection of the convicts when employed on extramural labour. In the following year, the death-rate was again high, and the Inspector-General of Jails came to the conclusion that too much regard had been paid to economy by those in charge, and directed that rations should be issued on a more liberal scale. Since that date the health of the jail has been fairly good, except in 1899 when there was a death-rate of 63 per mille. This high death-rate was partly attributed to overcrowding and to the insanitary character of the sheds in which the

prisoners were housed while the jail was under reconstruction, and partly to the prevalence of a peculiarly malignant form of malarial fever in the town. The arrangements in the jail are now quite admirable, and of recent years the death-rate has been low.

At the headquarters of each subdivision there is a jail in which male convicts are allowed to be detained for three months, and female convicts for one. Persons sentenced to a longer term of imprisonment are transferred to the jail at Sylhet. The wards are constructed on high mud plinths, and have iron posts and roofs and bamboo walls, and are situated in an enclosure surrounded by a bamboo palisade. The statement in the margin shows the area of the premises and the number of prisoners for whom accommodation is provided. The prisoners are usually employed on gardening or cleaning the drains and repairing the roads of the town; and, inside the jail, are sometimes put to paddy husking and the mustard oil mill. Table XIX shows the population, the mortality, and the financial results of each jail in 1881, 1891, and 1901.

	No. of pris- oners who can be accom- modated.	Area. Acres.
Sanamganj ...	54	37
Habiganj ...	54	41
Maulavi Bazar...	33	33
Karimganj ...	35	33

In the days of native rule there were a large number of village schools, in the district, where children were taught to read by the local Pundit or Maulavi and were instructed in the mysteries of Sanskrit or the Koran. For many

Education.

years after our occupation of the country, these indigenous and unaided schools were the only ones the people had, and education on the English system is a plant of comparatively recent growth. In 1867, or less than forty years ago, there were only 28 schools and 1,127 scholars in the district. * Nearly half of these children were living in Sylhet town, so that amongst the millions in the mofussil, education on the English system might be said to be almost non-existent. The following abstract shows the development of education since 1874 ; and how the 1,100 pupils of 1867 had increased to nearly 40,000 in 1901. The figures for later years will be found in the appendix (Tables XX).

Years.	Number of secondary schools.	Pupils.	Number of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	Number of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	27	1,608	195	5,218	6,826	252	...	...
1880-81	31	2,654	285	8,829	11,483	171	7·32	0·09
1890-91	44	4,424	695	22,342	26,766	81	15·35	1·03
1900-01	68	5,701	1,017	33,809	39,510	57	21·39	2·24

High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the En-

* Principal Heads of the History and Statistics of the Dacca Division, page 326.

trance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The smaller boys no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools; in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—(1) Bengali comprising literature, grammar, and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, and (6) simple lessons on botany and agriculture.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than six per cent. of the total number, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes reading, writing, dictation, simple arithmetic, and the geography of Assam. In Upper Primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, mensuration and a little history. The standard of instruction given still

leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes.

Sylhet is fairly well supplied with secondary schools.

**Sites of College
and principal
schools.**

The Murarichand second grade unaided College in Sylhet town was founded by Raja Girish Chandra Roy in 1892 and is supported by that gentleman. There is a Government high school at Sylhet, aided high schools at Habiganj, Sunamganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Karimganj, and unaided high schools at Sylhet and Baniyachung. There are also one Government, 40 aided and 4 unaided middle English schools, and 14 schools which are classified as middle vernacular. A list of these schools will be found in the Appendix. In 1901, the proportion of literate males was 81 per mille, which was higher than that in any district of the Province, with the exception of the Cachar Plains. Female education has made very little progress, and only four women in every thousand were returned as literate at the last census.

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Sylhet.

**Medical. General
sanitary conditions
of the district.**

It contains 43 dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He

also acts as Superintendent of the Jail and Leper Asylum, he controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death-rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

The conditions under which the majority of the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long term of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the poorer people, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms which would cost but little to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over humid atmosphere.* Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is usually bad and is drawn either from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. Hindus are generally burnt upon the river bank, and the mattress on which the corpse was carried to the pyre is left to rot upon the ground, to be carried off in the next flood

* The Civil Surgeon has found that excellent results have attended the clearance of bamboo jungle in places where fever has been particularly bad.

with all the germs of disease it may contain. In the cold weather the carcasses of dead cattle are thrown into the river, and the Civil Surgeon has seen more than sixty in a single trip from Karimganj to Fenchuganj. These masses of decaying matter often drift into back eddies, where they thoroughly pollute water which is often subsequently used for all domestic purposes. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital occurrences are reported verbally by the village chaukidars to the police, but the accuracy of the statistics leaves much to be desired. In 1902, enquiries were made by the testing staff with regard to 34,000 births and deaths, and it was found that 6 per cent. of them had been omitted from the registers. The mean recorded birth-rate for the decade, 1891-1901, was 34, and the death-rate 33 per mille.

The diseases which are most common in the district are fevers of various kinds, small-pox, chicken-pox, measles, cholera, dysentery and diarrhoea, skin diseases, and worms. Enteric and gastric fevers, dengue, and diptheria are seldom met with. Fevers are divided into three main classes: intermittent fever with ague, remittent fever which generally lasts some fifteen days with a long and tedious convalescence, and *kala azar*, which is here known as *pet mota* or *mulki pira*. *Kala azar* has been prevalent for many years in the Brahmaputra Valley and has produced the most appalling mortality in the Garo Hills and in Lower and Central

Principal diseases:
Fever.

Assam, but till comparatively recently it was thought that Sylhet was free from the disease.

In 1897, after the great earthquake, malarial fevers became extremely common, and some of them assumed a malignant and fatal type which was not amenable to ordinary treatment. The people themselves looked upon this fever as a new disease, and after some enquiry the Medical Department came to the conclusion that it was probably identical with the dreaded *kala azar* of Assam. Their uncertainty was due to the fact that it is difficult to distinguish between *kala azar* and ordinary malarial fever, the principal points of difference being the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy, the extreme condition of cachexia which is rapidly induced, and the small proportion of recoveries. As to the exact nature of the disease the medical profession is still in doubt: as to the appalling effects it can produce there is unfortunately no question.

The fever in Sylhet is of a remittent type, the spleen and liver are enlarged, the complexion is of a leaden hue, and there is considerable wasting of the muscles. The disease is not so widespread or of such a fatal type as the form that is found in the Brahmaputra Valley, but it is said to be intensely prevalent in some portions of the district. The mortality in 1897 was very high in Sylhet, but that year was an exceptionally unhealthy one in every part of the Province, and since that date the health of the district has been fairly good. Serious outbreaks of fever also occurred in 1879, and again in 1884 and 1885. For the present at any rate, the North

and South Sylhet subdivisions appear to be the most feverish portions of the district. The inhabitants of Habiganj and Sunamganj enjoy better health, possibly because almost the whole of the country goes under water in the rains.

Cholera appears every year in the Habiganj, Sunamganj, and North Sylhet subdivisions and is a regular visitor to the police stations of Jagannathpur, Dirai, Baniyachung, Nabiganj, and Biswanath. The disease is generally most severe in the autumn when the floods are drying up, and its dissemination is assisted by the careless habits of the people and the reckless way in which they allow their drinking water to be polluted. On the outbreak of an epidemic, native doctors are sent amongst the people, and efforts are made to prevent the villagers from flinging carcasses and dead bodies into the *haors* and rivers. The district is, however, fairly free from cholera. Only four times in the last twenty years has the recorded death-rate from this disease exceeded 4 per mille, and not once has it been as high as 5 per mille, but in 1870 there was such a violent outburst of this dreadful epidemic that the Magistrate closed the courts for 17 days. Small-pox of course exists, but the mortality is far from high, and virulent outbreaks are not so common as in other parts of the Province. It is perhaps on this account that the inhabitants seem a little indifferent to the advantages of vaccination. In the five years ending with 1902-03, only 34 per mille were on the average annually protected as compared with 44 per mille in the Province as a whole. Skin diseases

are very prevalent and so are worms, the uncleanly habits of the people rendering the dissemination of the ova a very simple matter. The parasites most generally found are the round worm, the tape-worm, the whip-worm, and the *anchylostomum duodenale*. Goitre and elephantiasis are very rare, but venereal diseases are said to be fairly common.

The native methods of midwifery leave much to be desired. The old Hindu Ayurvedic system seems to have prescribed a fairly reasonable treatment. The hut in which the patient was confined was to be newly erected for the occasion, fairly spacious, well ventilated and dry; the bedding was to be clean, and the attendants were required to cut their nails and wear clean clothing. After delivery the mother was to be carefully tended, and protected from anything likely to retard recovery till her health was properly restored. In the case of unnatural presentations the infant should be thrust back into the uterus and turned if possible, and when this proved to be impracticable, it was dismembered and brought out in pieces.

At the present day the practice of erecting a new hut is often disregarded, and, where one is built, it is generally of the most unsanitary description; but in many families a dark and ill-ventilated room which is attached to the main house is specially reserved for lying in. The patient is attended by low caste widows who are ignorant and uncleanly. In a natural and easy labour they have not much opportunity of doing harm, but where delivery is retarded, they often do much injury

alike to mother and to child. They generally endeavour to induce the premature expulsion of the placenta and thus cause hæmorrhage which is sometimes fatal. The mortality of mothers in child-birth is said to be considerable. The zenana system is supposed to have a prejudicial effect upon female health, early marriage is common, little girls become mothers before they are fitted to support the strain, and the shock of parturition not unfrequently is fatal to a constitution already weakened by malaria. Septicæmia is often caused by the uncleanness of the surroundings of the mother and her attendants, and the treatment after delivery is generally most injudicious. The patient, instead of being allowed to rest in quiet, is encouraged to move about, and often takes a cold bath in the tank before the house. Midwives from Behar and Upper India are reported to be not quite so ignorant and unskilful as those of Bengal.

The Ayurvedic system of medicine is said to have fallen into disrepute owing to the ignorance of the Kabirajes who are its principal exponents. The medicines are generally prepared from iron, silver, copper, arsenic, sulphur, mercury, from plants and trees, and sometimes from cobra poison. A native doctor who has now retired from Government employment reports that he has found the use of cobra poison to be attended by the most excellent results. Ganaks treat cases of small-pox, chicken-pox, and measles, but decline to reveal their methods. Ojhas attempt to cure the sick by incantations, and Mullas by reading the Koran in a chorus.

**Native medical
methods.**

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. The first dispensary was opened in Sylhet in 1863. From the statement in the

margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 17 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 390 to

	Dispensaries.	Patients
	No.	treated
	No.	No.
1881	4	13,553
1891	24	152,732
1901	43	230,996
1903	43	267,329

8,068. The principal dispensaries are those situated at Sylhet, Maulavi Bazar, Rabir Bazar, Habiganj, Sunamganj, Srimangal, and Kulaura, each of which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of more than 40 persons, while Sylhet headed the list with 81. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are worms, cutaneous disorders, malarial fevers, diseases of the eye, dysentery and diarrhœa, and rheumatic affections. Further details with regard to the medical administration of each subdivision will be found in Table XXII, and with regard to each dispensary in Table XXIII. Table V shows the registered mortality from certain of the principal diseases. The figures are not correct but give some idea of the comparative value of these different ailments as lethal agents. Of recent years the district has been fairly healthy and since 1899 the recorded birth-rate has generally exceeded the recorded death rate by about 8 per mille.

An asylum for the reception of lepers was opened at Sylhet in October 1898. It is situated on the north bank of the Surma on the outskirts of the town, and consists of twenty small *cutcha* houses which can accommodate 18 single lepers and 14 families. Under the Lepers Act III of 1898 pauper lepers may be sent to the asylum from Sylhet, Sunamganj, Karimganj, Maulavi Bazar, and Habiganj, and from Silchar and Hailakandi. Twenty lepers were under treatment in the asylum at the end of 1903.

The following is a list of the various measurements and surveys which at different times have been made of different portions of the district :—

- | | | | | |
|----|---|-----|-----|--------------|
| 1. | Hastobad by Mr. Willes | ... | ... | 1788 to 1790 |
| 2. | Halabadi (a) partly by Mr. Ward | ... | ... | 1820 |
| | (b) " " " Tucker | ... | ... | 1822 to 1829 |
| 3. | Lieutenant Fisher's Survey of <i>ilam</i> lands | ... | ... | 1827 to 1834 |
| 4. | Survey for the resumption of invalid Revenue-free grants by deputy collectors | ... | ... | 1836 to 1840 |
| 5. | Lieutenant Thuillier's Survey of Jaintia | ... | ... | 1837 to 1840 |
| 6. | Ditto 11 parganas of Zilla Latu | ... | ... | 1842 |
| 7. | Takbast Survey | ... | ... | 1859 to 1866 |
| 8. | Survey of <i>ilam</i> and other petty temporarily settled estates in the district by deputy and sub-deputy collectors | ... | ... | 1871 to 1880 |
| 9. | Survey of Jaintia by Mr. Beckett | ... | ... | 1875 to 1878 |

10. Topographical Survey of the hills in the Karimganj, South Sylhet, and Habiganj subdivisions by Major Badgley and Colonel Woodthorpe 1877 to 1883
11. Survey to test the accuracy of the *takbast* measurement by Mr. P. A. G. Cowley 1882
12. Cadastral Survey of pargana Pratapgarh by Mr. Barrett 1891 to 1892
13. Cadastral Survey of Jaintia Parganas by Mr. Barrett 1892 to 1893
14. Cadastral Survey of *ilam* estates in Sylhet Proper, by Babu G. C. Das, E.A.C. 1896 to 1897

The revenue survey of 1859—1866, which is generally spoken of as the *takbast*, is of considerable importance, as the maps and papers have on more than one occasion been held by the Civil Courts to be valuable evidence of possession and title. It was never confirmed, as required by section 4, Act IX of 1847 ; but, in spite of this, it is the general policy of Government to decline to recognise any claims to land which was not included in the purview of its operations.

APPENDIX.
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STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
1. Bagchara	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Jaintiapur	31	713	222	156
2. Barjan	Ditto	Sadr ...	10	788	205	241
3. Brahmanchara	Mhd. Bakht, Karim Bakht, Golam Rebbani and Abdul Majid.	Ditto	4	329	130	43
4. Obergaong including Fatehpur.	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Goyainghat	10	872	836	294
5. Chhotoagol	Babu Juwar Mohal Taniwal.	Ditto	10½	2,430	204	218
6. Dawkergul	Lubha Tea Co., Ltd. ..	Kansirghat	40	630	170	203

**STATEMENT A.—contd.
List of Tea Gardens.**

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdi- sional head- quarters.	Area on 31st De- cember 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st Decem- ber 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.						
7. Gului	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Goyainghat	12	1,368	440	468
8. Indanagar	Lubha Tea Co., Ltd.	Fenchuganj	21½	2,631	(a) 400	468
9. Jafang	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Goyainghat	28	1,910	1,072	1,350
10. Jaintia	Ditto	Jaintiapur	32	612	165	146
11. Kalegul	Ditto	Sadr ...	9	1,378	429	463
12. Kewachara	Lakatura Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	5½	1,155	489	308

STATEMENT A.

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13. Khadimnagar	...	North Sylhet Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Ditto	...	5½	3,712	257	510
14. Lakatura	...	Lakatura Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Ditto	...	3	1,831	608	633
15. Lalakhali	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	...	Jaintiapur	...	34	1,396	187	253
16. Lubhachara	...	Lubha Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Kanaighat	...	32	892	485	324
17. Malnichara	...	Sylhet Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Sadr ...	...	3½	2,497	620	586
18. Manrapur and Anipar.	...	Land Mortgage Bank of India.	...	Fenchuganj	...	20	2,175	460	522
19. Mulagul	...	Lubha Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Kanaighat	...	35	937	250	214
20. Nunchara	...	Ditto	...	Ditto	...	39	1,027	213	233
21. Tarapur	...	Babu Baikuntha Chandra Gupta.	...	Parkul	...	2	505	136	106
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.									
1. Amo or Ghanceyampur.	...	Messrs Aitchison, Alex, Milne and A. Odling.	...	Muchikandi	...	23	2,840	806	1,040
2. Chandichara	...	Chandichara Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Ditto	...	22	1,887	664	649
3. Chandpur	...	Chapadur Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Ditto	...	21	4,551	1,260	1,428
4. Daragaon	...	Bharaura Tea and Messrs. McLeod & Co., Ltd.	...	Ditto	...	16	3,151	1,188	1,049

(a) Estimated.

STATEMENT A.—contd.
List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivi- sional head- quarters.	Area on 31st De- cember 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st Decem- ber 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.—contd.						
5. Deundi	Messrs. R. L. Alston and J. E. Aird.	Muchikandi	17	1,962	790	730
6. Lalchand	Messrs. R. L. Alston and M. H. Alston.	Ditto	12	2,000	636	720
7. Laskarpur	Laskarpur Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	19	3,090	755	887
8. Parkul	Parkul Syndicate.	Ditto	19	2,044	300	335
9. Rasidpur	Bharauna (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	16	4,310	1,328	1,323
10. Rema	Imperial Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	24	1,911	749	638

STATEMENT A.

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11. Surma	...	Ditto	Madhabpur	...	20	4,025	856	962
12. Telapara	...	Teliapara Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	...	21	1,562	650	646
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.								
1. Alinagar	...	Alinagar Tea Co., Ltd.	Kamalganj	...	16	3,624 (b)	1,030	1,491
2. Amrailchara	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Srimangal	...	24	3,096	689	959
3. Baramchal	...	Messrs. Macneill & Co. and Executors of late Messrs. Davidson and Malet.	Rajnagar	...	21	1,974	450	505
4. Bharaura (North)	...	Bharaura (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	Srimangal	...	14	2,421	1,400	1,041
5. Do. (South)	...	Ditto	Ditto	...	15			
6. Burmachara	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Ditto	...	24	(c) 5,313	555	582
7. Chandbhag	...	Lubha Tea Co., Ltd.	Rajnagar	...	17	1,393	316	231
8. Chatlapur	...	Alinagar Tea Co.	Kamalganj	...	19	3,042	822	1,359
9. Clevedon	...	Messrs. K. C. Harrison, G. S. Beatson, H. A. Harrison and others.	Hingajiya	...	27	1,359	328	530

(b) Includes figures for Huglichara.

(c) Includes figures for Rajghat and Slindurkhan.

STATEMENT A.—contd.
List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivi- sional head- quarters.	Area on 31st De- cember 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st Decem- ber 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.						
10. Dhalai	...	...	Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
11. Fultala	Dhalai Tea Co. ...	Kamalganj				
12. Fuskuri	New Sylhet Tea Co. ...	Hingajiya				755
13. Gandichara	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Matiganj				1,510
14. Gyaanagar	Ditto	Ditto	22	2,865 (d) 9,878	490	433
15. Garipur	Mr. H. P. S. McMeekin.	...	23	345	Not available	564
	Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co., W. Marillier, R. Wood and Dr. Le Franc.	Maunavi Bazar	7	1,608	391	428
	...	Hingajiya	23	1,124	240	285

STATEMENT A.

...	...	Kamalganj	...	20	655	(Not available.)	618
16. Govindpur	...	Babus Baikuntha Nath Sarma, Sukhamaya Obaidhuri and Rasmaya Chaudhuri.	...	...	...	...	...
17. Halschura	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	...	14	572	285	387
18. Harchara	...	Babu Surja Mani Das	...	16	100	35	31
19. Hingajiya	...	Chargola Tea Association, Ltd.	...	15	2,118	942	1,129
20. Huglichara	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	...	26	Included in Amrail-chara.	694	767
21. Ita	...	Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	...	16	3,570	1,300	1,520
22. Jagchura	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	...	11	2,473	905	1,091
23. Kajurichara	...	Ditto	...	23	Included in Fuskuri.	559	852
24. Kakiachara	...	Ditto	...	17	2,069(e)	419	503
25. Kalighat	...	Ditto	...	19	1,683	776	1,035
26. Kaliti	...	Kaliti Tea Co., Ltd.	...	24	232	Not available.	445
27. Kanihati	...	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	...	16	1,362	1,120	1,903

(d) Includes figures for Kajurichara, Puttiachara, and Tiprachara.

(e) Includes figures for Phulchara.

STATEMENT A.—contd.
List of Tea Gardens.

Name of Garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—contd.						
28. Kapnapahar ...	Messrs. H. B. Klugh, A. J. M. McLaughlin and D. Laing.	Hingajiya	30	1,082	345	350
29. Karmachara ...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj	22	3,887	745	1,191
30. Lakshachara (Luckichara).	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Srimangal	20	271	Not available.	743
31. Langla ...	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	Hingajiya	14	4,674	1,450	2,303
32. Luayoni ...	Mr. R. L. Alston	Ditto	12	1,200	400	425
33. Madhabpur ...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj	19	3,001	619	906

STATEMENT A.

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34. Majilhi	...	Majilhi Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Srimangal	...	9	3,595	660	791
35. Mirtinga	...	Messrs. J. Peter and R. L. Alston.	Kamalganj	...	9	2,842	640	547
36. Mirzapur	...	Messrs. C. E. Lane, M. Bigge, E. R. Hunt, R. Hunt and W. V. H. Cobbett.	Srimangal	...	80	2,201	598	842
37. Pallakandi	...	Syed Ali Akbar Khandkar.	Hingajiya	...	15	250	60	23
38. Parbatpur	...	Mrs. Balfour	Rajnagar	...	8	1,726	330	408
39. Patrakhala	...	Mr. Thomas McMeekin	Kamalganj	...	22	4,392	796	1,337
40. Phuchara	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Srimangal	...	19	Included in Kakia-chara.	668	982
41. Puttiachara	...	Ditto	Ditto	...	23	Included in Fuskuri.	459	409
42. Rajghat	...	Ditto	Ditto	...	25	Included in Burma-chara.	680	942
43. Bajki ...	...	The Surma Valley Tea Co., Ltd.	Hingajiya	...	36	2,317	483	685
44. Rajnagar	...	Rajnagar Tea Co., Ltd.	Rajnagar	...	10	2,240	829	1,204
45. Rangiachara	...	Manlavi Ali Amjad Khan.	Hingajiya	...	21	2,000	226	213

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdi- visional head- quarters.	Area on 31st De- cember 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—concl.						
46. Ratna ...	Imperial Tea Co., Ltd....	Hingajiya	29	1,551	361	594
47. Sagarnal ...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Ditto	30	1,564	630	812
48. Shameharnagar, in- cluding Bhagichara	The Langla (Sylhet) Tea Co., Ltd.	Kamalgaonj	15	3,674	1,550	2,173
49. Satgaon ...	Messrs. J. Aitkin, J. Lilburne, J. Steel, R. H. Steel, H. Wat- son, J. Watson and T. H. Watson.	Srimangal	21	2,022	788	1,202

STATEMENT A.

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50. Shillua	...	The Surma Valley Tea Co., Ltd.	Hingajiya	...	34	2,366	291	333
51. Shindurkhan	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Simangal	...	24	Included in Burma-chara.	594	604
52. Singoor or Degai-chara.	...	Ditto	Hingajiya	...	18	1,860	333	309
53. Tiprachara	...	Ditto	Simangal	...	26	Included in Fuskari.	634	587
54. Udna ...	...	Messrs. H. S. Currie and Cecil Chapman and Rev. W. H. Chapman.	Rajnagar	...	13	1,256	288	264
55. Uttarbhag	...	The Indeswar Tea and Trading Co., Ltd.	Ditto	...	15	1,223	341	310
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.								
1. Adamtala	...	Mr. H. A. Brown Constable.	Patharkandi	...	23	2,831	500	624
2. Anipur	...	Chargola Tea Association, Ltd.	Ratabari	...	30	(b) 1,127	(a) 1,673	469
3. Baitakhal	...	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	Patharkandi	...	26	1,748	412	535
4. Bhunirghat or Eve-tala.	...	Messrs. M. C. Noad, Lewis and F. H. Noad.	Ditto	...	25	1,804	594	670

(a) Includes figures for Ohargola, Kalachara and Tarvinchara.

(b) Includes figures for Kalachara.

STATEMENT A.—contd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KABIMGANJ						
SUBDIVISION—contd.						
5. Champabari ...	Puthai Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Patharkandi ...	25	1,326	643	533
6. Chandkhira ...	Chandkhira Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto ...	24	1,019	392	519
7. Chandnighat and Bidyanagar.	Raja G. C. Roy ...	Ratabari ...	31	975	895	911
8. Chergola ...	Chergola Tea Association, Ltd.	Ditto ...	30	1,675	Included in Anipur	1,403
9. Bahingai ...	Bopendra Sri Ghosh ...	Jaldhub ...	21	588	492	200
10. Dhamrai and Silghat ...	Dhamrai Tea Co., Ltd....	Ditto ...	26	4,110	776	802
11. Silghat ...	Erallgul Tea Co., Ltd....	Patharkandi ...	17	1,824	492	774

STATEMENT A—concd.

List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Thana in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 31st December 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
KABINGANJ						
Subdivision—concd.						
24. Olisichara	...	Ratabari	40	824	310	470
25. Poplegul	The Consolidated Tea and Lands Co., Ltd.	...	26	1,555	548	836
26. Pathal...	Pathni Tea Co., Ltd.	Patharkandi	27	2,100	695	1,091
27. Salgai ...	Ditto	Ditto	30	1,898	1,800	1,005
28. Samanbhag	Hatikhira Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	27	6,612	885	1,263
29. ...	Samanbhag Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaldhub	15	2,450	230	63
30. ...	Baba Golek Chandra Das and others.	Jaldhub	...	...	...	...

STATEMENT B. List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Adampur* ...	Kamalganj, Adampur
Ajmiriganj ...	Abidabad, Juar Baniyachung.
Akhalia ...	Sylhet, Akhalia.
Assampara ...	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Atgram ...	Karimganj, Ichamati.
Badarpur* ...	Karimganj, Chapghat.
Bahubal ...	Habiganj, Faizabad.
Balaganj* ...	Balaganj, Bualjur.
Bamai ...	Lakhai, Bamai.
Baniyachung ...	Baniyachung, Baniyachung.
Barlekha ...	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Begumpur ...	Balaganj, Burunga.
Bejora ...	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Bekiteka ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Bhangabazar ...	Karimganj, Chapghat.
Bianibazar ...	Jaldhub, Panchakhanda Khurda.
Birasri ...	Karimganj, Kusiarkul.
Biawanath ...	Biawanath, Bajubanhag.
Bithangal ...	Abidabad, Bithangal.
Bramandura ...	Habiganj, Uchail.
Chandkhira* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Chandpur Bagan* ...	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Charkhai ...	Jaldhub, Charkhai.
Chatali* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Chatali.
Chhatak* ...	Chhatak, Chhatak.
Chhatiaia ...	Habiganj, Bejora.
Dakhinbhag* ...	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Dhakadakshin ...	Golapganj, Dhakadakshin.
Dharmapasha ...	Dharmapasha, Selbaras.
Dighirpar ...	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.
Dirai Chandpur ...	Dirai, Khalisa Betal.
Dullabchara* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Dullabpur ...	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.

FOOT-NOTE.—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices and there is a departmental telegraph office at Sylhet town.

STATEMENT B— contd.
List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Duttagram ...	Kamalganj, Kanihati.
Dwarabazar* ...	Chhatak, Dualia.
Fenchuganj* ...	Fenchuganj, Mowrapur Howli.
Gankul ...	Jaldhub, Pathariya.
Gaurarang ...	Sunamganj, Lakshansiri.
Gobindaganj ...	Chhatak, Kauria.
Gobindapur ...	Habiganj, Kusimnagar.
Golapganj ...	Golapganj, Baraya.
Gopaya ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Goyainghat ...	Goyainghat, Dhargam.
Habiganj* ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Inathganj ...	Nabiganj, Agna.
Indeswar ...	Rajnagar, Indeswar.
Itakhola* ...	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Jafang ...	Goyainghat, Jafang.
Jagannathpur ...	Jagannathpur, Atujan Kismat.
Jaintiapur ...	Jaintiapur Jaintiapuriraj.
Jaldhub ...	Jaldhub, Bahadurpur.
Jalsuka ...	Abidabad, Jalsuka.
Jatua ...	Chhatak, Jatua.
Kajaldhara* ...	Hingajiya, Langla.
Kaliarbhanga ...	Nabiganj, Baniyachung.
Kalighat* ...	Matiganj, Balisira.
Kamalganj ...	Kamalganj, Bhanugach.
Kamarkhal ...	Jagannathpur, Naigang.
Kanaibazar ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Kanairghat* ...	Kanairghat, Choura.
Karimganj* ...	Karimganj, Kusiarkul.
Khadimnagar ...	Sylhet.
Kubajpur ...	Jagannathpur, Atujan.
Kulaura ...	Hingajiya, Langla.
Kurua ...	Balaganj, Kurua.
Lakhai ...	Lakhai, Lakhai.
Lalabazar ...	Sylhet, Chaitanyanagar.
Lalchand ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Langla* ...	Hingajiya, Langla.

Foot-note—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT B—contd.
List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Latu ...	Karimganj, Barapara
Lugaon ...	Nabiganj, Dinarpur.
Madhabpur ...	Madhabpur, Bejora.
Madhyanagar ...	Dharmapasha, Bangsikunda
Manumukh* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Satrasati Howli.
Maulavi Bazar* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Chowalis.
Moglabazar ...	Sylhet, Renga.
Muchikandi ...	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Mudna* ...	Lakhai, Lakhai.
Munshibazar* ...	Maulavi Bazar, Bhanugach.
Nabiganj ...	Nabiganj, Juar Baniyachung.
Narpati ...	Muchikandi, Taraf.
Nilambasar ...	Karimganj, Deudi.
Pagla ...	Sunamganj, Pagla.
Pail ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Pailgaon ...	Jagannathpur, Atnajan Kismat.
Patharkandi* ...	Patharkandi, Pratapgarh.
Pathariya ...	Sunamganj, Khalisa Betal.
Phultola ...	Hingajiya, Bhatera.
Prithimpasha ...	Hingajiya, Langla.
Pukhura ...	Baniyachung, Baniyachung.
Putijuri ...	Habiganj, Putijuri.
Rainagar ...	Sylhet, Kashba Sylhet.
Rajaniganj ...	Hingajiya, Langla.
Rajnagar ...	Rajnagar, Shamsdernagar.
Ratabari ...	Ratabari, Paldahar.
Sachna ...	Dharmapasha, Khalisa Betal
Sagarnal ...	Hingajiya, Langla.
Saistaganj* ...	Habiganj, Taraf.
Satgaon ...	Matiganj, Satgaon.
Satiajuri ...	Habiganj, Tataf.
Shamsherganj ...	Matiganj, Satgaon.
Shamshernagar* ...	Kamalganj, Shamsdernagar.
Srigauri ...	Karimganj Chapghat.
Srimangal ...	Matiganj, Balisira.
Sugbar ...	Habiganj, Taraf.

Foot-note—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT B—concl'd.

List of Post Offices.

Name of Office.	Thana or Outpost and Pargana in which situated.
Sujatpur ...	Habiganj, Juanshai.
Sukhair ...	Dharmapasha, Sukhair.
Sunamganj* ...	Sunamganj, Lakhansiri,
Syedpurbazar ...	Nabiganj, Agna.
Sylhet ...	Sylhet town.
Tahirpur ...	Tahirpur, Laur.
Tajpur ...	Balaganj, Dulali.

Foot-note—The offices marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.

STATEMENT C.
List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DN.		SUNAMGANJ SUB-DN—conold. Ohhatak—conold.	OHHATAK BAZAR. Chaudhuri's Hat. Duhalia. Dwara Bazar. Ilm Chaudhuri's Hat. Imamganj Hat. Jaur Hat. Gobindaganj. Jiapur. Kalaruka. Mangalpur. Marja. Noobasar. Singohapair. Sonanta.
Tahirpur ...	Badaghat Bazar. Sripur Bazar. Tahirpur.		
Dharmapasha ...	Bichna. Bir. Dharmapasha. Jayaari. Madhyannagar. Mahishbola. Paikarhati. Rajapur. Sanbari.		
Dirai ...	Anandapur. Bara Matabpur. Charnarohar. Dirai. Gaobha. Hushanpur. Rahutola. Ranarohar. Sajanpur. Salla. Syamarohar.	HABIGANJ SUB-DN. Baniyachung and Abidabad.	AJMIRIGANJ. BANIYACHUNG. Birat. Bithangal. Gunal. Ikram. Jalsuka. Kamalganj. Markbali. Pukhura. Sangar. Sujaipur.
Sunamganj ...	Jaikela. Jainagar. Pagla. Sachna. SUNAMGANJ.	Lakhai ...	Bulla, Lakhai.
Jagannathpur...	Budhrail. Hushanpur. Isakpur. Jagannathpur. Kamarkhal. Kaminiipur. Keshabpur. Palligan. Patkura. Ramapatipur. Basulganj. Shibganj.	Madhabpur ...	Baghasura. Bejora Hat. Chenghar Bazar. Ohhatiaia. Deogas. Dharmaghar. Harinkholar Bazar. Itakhola. Jagadishpur. Kalirbasar. MADHABPUR BAZAR. Mantola Bazar. Munshi Bazar. Shahapur. Surmachara Garden. Teliapara Garden.
Ohhatak ...	Ambari. Barnigaon.		

STATEMENT C—contd.
List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
HABIGANJ SUB-DN—conold.		NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.	
Habiganj ...	Bahubal. Bekiteka. Daudnagar. HABIGANJ. Mashajan. Mirpur. Nandanpur. Pail. Purikhola. Putijuri. Saistaganj. Sarkarer Bazar Shahji Bazar. Sughar. Tungeswar.	Biswanath—conold.	Habrar Bazar. Kaliganj. Kamal Bazar. Lamakazi Bazar. Mufti Bazar. Pargana Bazar. Rajaganj. Saifaganj.
Muchikandi ...	Amu. Assampara. Basirganj. Chandbhanga. Chandpur. Chunarughat. Daragaon. Deundi. Gargaria. Gaziganj. Habibulla. Lalchand. Laskarpur. Muchikandi. Parkul. Rajabazar. Remachara. Sakir Mahmud.	Balaganj ...	BALAGANJ. Burunga Bazar. Dewan Bazar. Goala Bazar. Goaljur Bazar. Khankar Bazar. Mangal Chandir Bazar. Muktarpur Bazar. Noabazar or Umarpur Bazar. Pargana Bazar or Dakshiner Bazar. Purkayasther Bazar. Sarkar Bazar. Thanar Bazar.
Nabiganj ...	Gopla. Inathganj. Khagaura. NABIGANJ. Saidpur. Shibganj.	Sylhet ...	Akhalia. SYLHET TOWN.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN.		Fenchuganj ...	Fenchuganj. Ghilachara known as Dewliband Bazar. Indanagar known as Chaudhuri Bazar. Kayasthagaon known as Bialia-bazar. Kotalpur known as Sen Bazar.
Biswanath ...	Amtail. Bairagi Bazar. Biswanath.	Goyainghat ...	Binnakandi. Chailakhel. Garol. Goyain. Haripur. Joga Bahar Haor. Kohaignhar.

STATEMENT C—contd.
List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DN—conold.		SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.	
Goyainghat— conold.	Manikganj Bazar. Mitiri Mahal (Salutikar). NIJPAT. Panch Hatikhel. Jafing Garden. Panichara. Sarufaud.	Maulavi Bazar— conold.	Dhipir Bazar in vil- lage Marukuna. Dighirpar in village Atgaon. Durgaganj in village Goalnagar known as Gayghar. Fakirer Bazar in vil- lage Damia. Gobindapur in vil- lage Dughar. Gopinathganj in vil- lage Shatia. Kalekhar Bazar in Nij Athangiri. Kazir Bazar in vil- lage Bekamura. Madanganj in vil- lage Mutukpur. Manumukh. MAULAVI BAZAR. Noyabazar in village Kamalpur. Shaunsherganj in vil- lage Daulatpur. Sarkar Bazar in vil- lage Sadhubati. Shibganj in village Damia. Syam Roy's Bazar in village Barman.
Golapganj ...	Baiyar Bazar. Chandarpur Bazar. Chaudhuri Bazar. Golapganj Bazar. Kurer Bazar. Puran Baiyar Bazar. Purbabhaag Bazar. Purkayasther Bazar. Itakhalganj Bazar. Senapatir Bazar. THAKURBARI BAZAR.		
Kanairghat ...	Aghbatia. Bhabaniganj. Birdhal. Chanderhat (Fatehganj.) Chatal Bazar. Gachbari. Kanairghat. Lalakhal. Manikganj. Mukiganj. (Jhingabari.) Mulaguli. Natanpur. Rajaganj. Sharakerhat.	Matiganj ...	Bhairab Bazar. Bowlasir. Jibanganj. Kakiachara. Kalapur, Gosain's Bazar. Matiganj. Itajer Bazar. Sindurkhan. Srimangal.
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN.			
Maulavi Bazar ...	Akhalikura. Bhairaber Bazar in village Gayghar. Dasner Bazar in vil- lages Raipur and Andhalpur.	Rajnagar ...	Baburbazar. Bagiohar Bazar. Bhairabganj. Bhangor Hat. Bhater Bazar. Chaudhuri's Bazar.

**STATEMENT C—contd.
List of Trade Centres.**

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—contd.		SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DN—conold.	
Rajnagar— conold.	Dewandighirpar Ghargaon. Ghoser Bazar. Kadamhata. Kankapan. Rajkrishna Bazar. Saheber Bazar. Sarkarer Bazar. Sonatola Bazar. Tarapasha.	Kamalganj— conold.	Tulsidasir or Joffar Bazar (Madhab- pur.)
Kamalganj ...	Adisachara Garden. Alinagar do. Babur Bazar (Kamarteki.) Babur Bazar (Srinathpur.) Bade Ubhahatar Bazar. Balragir Bazar. Dighirparer Bazar. (Brindabanpur.) Dourachara Garden. Ghater Bazar (Dharmapur.) Heringar Bazar. Kamalganj Bazar. Kanihati Garden. Katabil Garden. Kurmachara Garden. Madanpur Garden. Madhabpur do. Mahalarparer Bazar (Srigar.) Mirtinga Garden. Munshi Bazar. Pathariya Garden. Rasir Bazar. Salimullar Bazar (Srinathpur. Bhanugaob.) Shamshernagar Garden. Sarkarer Bazar (Madhabpur.) Tetoigaon Bazar. Tilar Bazar or Kanalasir Bazar (Adampur.)	Hingajiya ...	Bhatara. Chaudhurir Bazar. Fulertal. Hingajiya. Kajaldhara. Kajaldhara Garden. Katarkona. Kaukapan. Kulaura. Lalbag. Langla Garden. Rabirbazar. Rangichara Garden. Sakaband.
		KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.	
		Karimganj ...	Babur Bazar. Bachlar " Badarpur " Bhanga " Bholaunath " Siabain Bazar (New) Do, (Old) Bidyanagar. Chadnighat Bazar. Chapra. Ohhagli. Dattapur. Durgarbazar. Ghoramara Laskar's Bazar. Kachumukh. Kalibari Bazar. Kalinanj. Kalinagar. KARIMGANJ. Kasirkhalerparer Ba- zar. Khalar Bazar. Kuchkhauri Bazar. Lakhir Bazar. Leta. Manipuri,ara.

STATEMENT C—conold.
List of Trade Centres.

Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.	Thana or Out-post.	Trade centres.
KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.—conold.		KARIMGANJ SUB-DN.—conold	
Karimganj— conold.	Mirerbasar. Miyakhali. Miyar Bazar. Munshi Bazar. Nilambazar. Noabazar. Puran Bazar. Ratabari. Ratanganj. Sarupganj. Shahaja Bazar. Shaha Jalaler Bazar. Srigauri Bazar. Srikona " Suranandapur Bazar.	Jaldhub ...	Bag Prashanda Khan's Bazar. Bairagir " Barlekha. " Barnir Bazar. Bholadshar. Biani Bazar. Bichra " Bohalir Bazar. Charia " Churkhal. Dakhingul Garden. Daser Bazar. Dhamai Garden. Dubager Bazar. Fakirer Gajbhag Garden. Gangkul. Ghagur Bazar. Gogra. Gopal Roy's Bazar. Jaldhub. Kakura Bazar. Kalibari " Kamalar " Kanongu's Bazar. Kathaltoli. Kolajura. Miyakhanir Bazar. Munshirkhalparer Bazar. Pakhiala. Radhar Bazar. Rajar " Ramdha " Saleewar " Shabajpur Bazar. Sheolartuk " Shibganj " Sonarupa Garden. Sujanagar. Talimpur. Teradaler Bazar.
Ratabari and Patharkandi	Adam Tila Garden. Anipur Garden. Audhan Bazar. Babur Bazar. Baitakhal Garden. Balichara Bazar. Barnail. Chandkhira Garden. Chargola " Eraligul " Eve Tila Garden. Hatikhira Garden. Isaganj. Kanair Bazar. Langai Garden. Medli " Noabazar. Parganar Bazar. PATHARKANDI. Puthini Garden. Salgai " Tilbhum "		
Jaldhub ...	Abhangir Bazar. Afisher " Ajimganj " Alinagar "		

STATEMENT D.
List of Middle Schools in 1905.

NAMES OF SCHOOL.	NAMES OF SCHOOL.
<i>North Sylhet Subdivision.</i> Akhaila M. E. Balaganj M. V. Begumpur (Sarat Sundari M. E. School). Burunga M. V. Dattarail M. E. (Dhakadakehin) Jaintia M. V. Kanairghat M. E. Mangalohandi M. E. Moglabazar M. E. Naikhai M. V. Rankeli M. E. Sylhet town (Girish M. E. School) " (Model Girl's M. V. School)	<i>Habiganj Subdivision—concl'd.</i> Jalsuka (Krishna Gobindo M. E. School) Machulia M. V. Mirasi M. E. Mirpur (Ram Gopal M. E. School) Nabiganj M. E. Putijuri M. E. Rajarbazar M. V. Rarisi M. E. Salsaganj M. E.
<i>Sunamganj Subdivision.</i> Brahmanjhalia M. E. Chhatak M. E. Duhaliya M. E. Jatua M. V. Kubajpur (Lalchand M. E. School) Madhyannagar M. E. Pagla M. E. Rajanagar M. E. Sunamganj (Raj Gobinda M. V. School)	<i>South Sylhet Subdivision.</i> Bhatera M. E. Bhunabir M. E. Kamalganj M. E. Maulavi Bazar M. V. Munshi Bazar (Kali Prosad M. E. School) Panchgaon (Kamal Charan M. E. School) Prithimpasha (Ali Amjad M. E. School) Srimangal (Victoria M. E. School) Tengra (Porteous M. E. School)
<i>Habiganj Subdivision.</i> Agna (Uday Gobinda M. E. School) Ajmiriganj M. E. Bamai (Ramdhan M. E. School) Baniyachung (Loknath M. E. School) Bejora M. E. Gobindapur M. V. Gopaya M. E. Habiganj M. V. Imamganj (Baidyanath M. E. School)	<i>Khrimganj Subdivision.</i> Agaram (Vishnupriya M. E. School) Bhanga M. E. Bianibazar (Panchakhanda M. E. School) Birasri M. E. Dhakauttor M. V. Karimganj (Tilak Chand M. V. School) Latu (Baikunta Chandra M. E. School) Lauta M. E. Nilambazar M. E. Pathariya M. E.

TABLE I.
Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn below the name of each station.

MONTHS.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.					
	Sunam- ganj. (22)	Sylhet. (47)	Karim- ganj. (22)	Langla. (21)	Manlavi Bazar. (18)	Habi- ganj. (22)
January ...	0.49	0.37	0.57	0.28	0.39	0.34
February ...	1.17	1.48	1.47	1.25	1.31	1.27
March ...	6.14	6.25	10.74	5.93	5.86	5.63
April ...	10.09	13.92	19.16	10.10	9.03	8.04
May ...	21.19	21.83	24.19	18.29	18.85	16.61
June ...	39.60	32.17	30.55	20.63	18.97	18.66
July ...	43.44	25.39	22.48	14.54	16.28	14.17
August ...	46.94	25.39	22.57	14.36	14.74	12.73
September...	31.74	20.55	18.90	13.04	12.13	11.31
October ...	8.07	7.90	7.74	5.75	5.65	4.84
November ...	0.62	1.12	1.06	0.95	1.07	0.61
December ...	0.19	0.27	0.72	0.38	0.40	0.30
Total of year ...	209.68	156.64	160.25	105.50	104.18	94.51

TABLE II.
Distribution of Population.

THANA.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Popula- tion per square miles.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
<i>Sadr</i> * ...	241,811	255,064	-13,253	604	400	6,738
Kanairghat* ...	79,677	82,960	-3,283	229	348	6,565
Balaganj ...	141,989	144,317	-2,328	222	640	.....
Sunamganj ...	113,088	107,531	+5,557	431	262	.....
Ohhatak ...	90,683	88,706	+1,977	257	353	.....
Dirai ...	151,020	144,028	+6,992	484	312	.....
Dharmapasha ...	78,961	73,116	+5,845	321	246	.....
Habiganj ...	214,710	198,716	+15,994	355	605	16,021
Baniyachung ...	130,198	116,560	+13,638	264	493	.....
Madhabpur ...	119,153	108,037	+11,116	183	651	2,841
Nabiganj† ...	90,940	81,279	+9,661	150	606	.....
Moulavi Bazar†	276,592	267,837	+8,755	580	477	51,239
Hingajiya ...	102,566	101,804	+762	260	394	18,605
Karimganj ...	281,565	259,237	+22,328	797	353	37,393
Jaldhub ...	128,895	126,401	+2,494	151	514	5,484
Total district ...	2,241,848	2,154,593	+87,255	5,388†	416	144,876

* The outpost Goyainglit, which in 1891 was under the Kanairghat thana, has been transferred to the *Sadr* thana. The figures for 1891 have been corrected.

† Hauli Satrasati pargana, which in 1891 contained 4,283 persons, has since been transferred to the Moulavi Bazar thana. The figures for 1891 for these two thanas have been corrected accordingly.

‡ The total area of the district is probably about 5,435 square miles but the Survey Department are unable to guarantee absolute accuracy in a matter of this kind.

TABLE III.

TABLE III.
General statistics of population.

PARTICULARS.	NORTH STREET SUBDIVISION.				SUNWANGJ SUBDIVISION.				HABIGANG SUBDIVISION.				SOUTH STREET SUBDIVISION.				KARIGANG SUBDIVISION.				TOTAL DISTRICT.					
	Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Persons.		Males.		Fems.	
	3	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14													
POPULATION—																										
1901 ..	232,229	230,246	230,030	202,722	278,403	276,599	191,318	187,840	208,081	2	079	2,241,848	1,141,060	1,100,788												
1891 ..	246,490	226,861	212,149	194,232	352,290	351,802	187,876	181,768	196,184	189,504		2,154,692	1,100,938	1,058,665												
1881 ..	446,763		232,680		477,769		318,477		845,421			1,969,009	999,786	988,224												
1872 ..	392,111		360,812		460,747		265,869		800,000			1,719,539	880,380	839,509												
VARIATION—																										
1891-1901 ..	-12,261	-6,603	+10,881	+9,490	+28,119	+26,297	+2,443	+6,074	+12,947	+12,876		+87,265	+40,122	+47,132												
1881-1901 ..	+36,579		+30,321		+26,803		+51,164		+41,217			+185,684	+101,163	+84,431												
1872-1881 ..	+94,681		+21,748		+37,043		+62,908		+43,431			+249,470	+119,485	+180,015												
1901.																										
RELIGION—																										
Total Hindus	77,922	73,986	104,235	90,088	127,699	129,827	115,378	116,481	103,848	106,394		1,049,348	522,975	516,373												
Vaisnavas	49,696	47,871	77,817	68,376	64,474	67,121	29,312	32,530	61,774	61,509		560,379	282,972	277,407												
Saktis ..	22,716	20,677	19,969	17,377	49,267	48,937	46,766	46,079	21,445	20,279		312,532	160,172	183,349												
Shivaites ..	1,643	1,681	2,889	2,443	4,518	4,495	11,314	10,103	9,238	8,548		57,571	80,062	37,569												
Mohammedans	183,995	165,003	128,317	113,278	148,726	145,349	74,713	71,243	97,939	94,771		1,180,324	600,880	578,664												
Ahmadi ..	1,176	1,161	464	353	2,024	1,996	1,007	939	1,116	1,102		11,337	5,787	5,650												
Total Christians	92	85	8	6	55	26	162	67	118	98		744	463	281												
Anglican Communions	32	16	...	4	37	12	68	10	64	10		98	359	48												
Freebyterian ..	26	26	...	3	6	...	67	40	9	9		10	259	99												
Roman Catholic ..	4	4	...	2	1	...	2	1	59	63		9	178	79												
Other religions	48	12	...	6	2	...	68	10	23	14		136	166	68												

TABLE III.

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CIVIL CONDITION—													
Unmarried ..	141,397	92,344	139,370	82,153	157,659	99,305	106,377	62,230	130,490	75,441	1,077,436	665,092	412,548
Married ..	83,696	89,481	82,757	79,950	111,457	117,323	77,036	82,896	80,398	85,159	890,171	438,372	454,798
Widowed ..	8,187	45,624	8,002	41,689	9,256	60,073	6,008	41,634	7,103	41,779	274,241	40,894	232,647
LITERACY—													
Literate in Bengali ..	30,796	1,068	12,319	432	35,393	1,419	12,124	665	16,339	713	93,057	88,761	4,296
Literate in English ..	1,803	37	603	7	1,456	24	976	59	1,017	14	5,966	5,865	111
Illiterate ..	210,835	239,062	216,407	208,284	262,664	277,145	177,546	187,108	190,540	201,650	2,144,329	1,048,092	1,096,237
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—													
Bengali ..	224,520	222,991	226,602	202,143	265,247	268,231	164,398	150,998	177,539	172,978	2,048,549	1,051,206	1,017,242
Eastern Hindi ..	4,659	3,456	2,092	290	6,398	4,206	22,985	22,027	20,553	19,767	108,432	65,677	50,345
Tipura ..	....	....	....	....	1,350	1,212	1,864	1,356	1,392	1,390	9,166	4,607	4,288
Oriya ..	790	680	36	1	276	214	2,499	2,488	422	503	9,908	5,053	4,286
Manipuri..	728	716	403	446	1,004	1,092	5,414	5,399	6,827	6,618	23,457	14,386	14,271

Pargana Hauli Batawali, which in 1891 contained a population of 2,112 males and 2,150 females, was in September 1891 transferred from the Habigaoj to the South Bylhet subdivision.

TABLE IV.
Birth place, race, caste, and occupation.

	NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.				SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.				HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.				SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.				KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.				TOTAL DISTRICT.						
	Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Males.		Fems.		Persons.		Males.		Fems.		
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
1																											
BIRTH PLACE—																											
Born in the district ..																											
" " other parts of Province ..																											
" " " Dacca, Mymensingh & Tippera ..																											
" " " Chota Nagpur ..																											
" " " other parts of Bengal ..																											
" " " United Provinces ..																											
" " " Central Provinces ..																											
" " elsewhere ..																											
RACE & CASTE—																											
Ahrs ..																											
Baidya ..																											
Bairi ..																											
Bauri ..																											
Bhar ..																											
Bhoinmal ..																											
Bhuiya ..																											
Bhuij ..																											
Brahman ..																											
Brahman ..																											
Das including Halwa Das, Sudra and Sudra Das ..																											
Dhoba ..																											
Dhob ..																											
Dhob ..																											
Dhob ..																											
Dom Patni ..																											
Durasan ..																											
European (e) ..																											
Ganak ..																											
Gosal ..																											
Jugi ..																											

TABLE IV. •

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	848	893	11,158	9,439	10,453	10,893	146	57	257	177	44,324	22,843	21,387
Kalbarita	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kamar	484	607	455	351	1,331	1,154	1,067	1,001	1,164	1,181	9,496	4,991	4,504
Kayastha	7,885	7,315	5,743	5,018	10,779	11,323	4,644	4,444	3,736	3,300	63,893	22,676	21,207
Khattriya	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kumbar	486	403	31	11	869	943	3,996	3,993	..	..	10,690	3,353	3,338
Malio	788	683	849	769	1,887	2,028	1,711	1,726	..	..	12,378	6,188	6,093
Manipuri	136	7	7,351	6,354	8,006	448	266	861	81	93	15,993	8,064	7,182
Munda	364	483	663	644	1,293	372	123	155	6,677	6,434	16,043	8,082	7,968
Namasandra (Chandal)	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nasip	10,613	10,123	9,693	8,522	21,013	21,304	7,359	7,793	18,396	17,473	123,307	67,092	65,214
Natal	1,741	1,668	1,898	1,607	3,452	3,471	2,328	2,384	1,466	1,419	21,324	10,775	10,449
Shaha	430	397	3	..	1,721	1,660	2,838	2,791	1,547	2,108	13,396	6,539	6,857
Sutradhar	1,868	1,432	3,971	3,325	7,560	8,078	1,900	1,685	1,669	2,020	84,406	16,863	17,551
Tell	757	743	1,387	1,209	3,764	4,076	932	781	45	65	13,748	6,892	6,683
Tippura	1,619	1,923	2,367	1,787	4,393	4,868	4,657	4,391	2,655	2,492	30,312	18,521	14,791
	42	57	..	..	1,406	1,364	1,206	1,378	941	1,373	8,261	4,092	4,168
OCCUPATION—													
Workers	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	844,168	699,002	145,166
Dependents	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,397,680	..	..
TOTAL SUPPORTED—													
Land holders	90,034	82,812	83,142	31,318	25,014	28,768	32,383	32,578	62,793	52,073	458,103	261,266	233,847
Tenants	86,540	91,307	155,595	140,888	183,723	162,950	97,835	91,878	93,400	86,208	1,168,864	595,782	573,771
Farmer servants	2,570	868	1,359	641	5,035	5,034	1,749	1,086	1,328	181	17,501	12,141	5,360
Garden labourers	6,274	6,667	..	..	8,701	8,899	31,267	31,951	19,849	20,156	132,214	66,191	69,023
Housemen	11,649	12,325	30,560	16,463	18,464	16,001	4,877	6,394	6,335	6,375	112,723	98,065	55,697
Peasants	2,516	2,593	1,778	1,718	5,478	4,948	2,186	2,107	2,300	1,969	28,768	14,454	14,332
General labourers	2,393	2,902	1,563	1,366	2,744	2,526	1,824	2,879	2,110	1,864	22,763	11,338	10,926
Beggars	5,701	4,656	1,669	2,303	2,484	3,555	1,398	2,456	2,366	2,501	27,324	11,432	15,371

(a) Includes allied races

TABLE V.
Vital statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille from.			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.
1901	2,241,848	36.49	28.89	1.25	1.13	13.08	1.80
1902	2,241,848	37.15	33.88	3.93	2.34	12.65	1.95
1903	2,241,848	38.16	27.12	1.03	0.15	11.30	1.73
1904	2,241,848	37.73	27.60	1.64	0.01	10.47	1.82
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE VI.
Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...	2,504,058	2,565,834	2,564,600	2,493,020		
Rice ...	1,966,930	2,071,815	2,075,650	2,061,000		
Mustard ...	38,433	38,911	38,767	37,000		
Sugarcane ...	11,346	14,414	14,565	15,000		
Pulses ...	5,582	2,857	3,808	3,000		
Linseed ...	68,340	69,029	68,598	69,000		
Jute ...	3,000	9,205	7,400	9,200		
All other crops ...	410,427	359,103	355,821	298,820		

	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...						
Rice ...						
Mustard ...						
Sugarcane ...						
Pulses ...						
Linseed ...						
Jute ...						
All other crops ...						

NOTE—So far as these figures relate to the permanently settled area, they are estimates only.

TABLE VI—contd.

Crop statistics.

	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
TEA.				-		
NORTH SYLHET						
SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	25	23	22	22		
Area in acres ...	18,961	18,190	18,613	26,711		
Area in acres under plant ...	8 002	7,831	7,475	7,634		
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...	2,779,283	2,411,859	2,862,299	2,391,570		
Labour force ...	8,391	6,123	7,784	7,211		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	238	...	99	202		

	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
TEA.						
NORTH SYLHET						
SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant ...						
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)						

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.
Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	13	13	12	12		
Area in acres ...	27,113	29,615	32,310	35,818		
Area in acres under plant ...	9,890	9,952	9,931	9,990		
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...	3,831,869	4,045,517	4,737,124	5,278,538		
Labour force ...	11,573	11,958	9,322	9,505		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	335	...	247	170		
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	58	57	55	55		
Area in acres ...	89,839	90,568	90,679	96,225		
Area in acres under plant ...	33,333	33,090	33,248	33,410		
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...	14,855,519	14,053,105	16,359,378	17,165,522		
Labour force ...	50,168	46,589	39,913	38,555		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	1,178	...	1,560	1,498		

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.
Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant ...						
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)						
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant ...						
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)						

(a) From 1908 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

Table VI—contd.
Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...	36	36	35	35		
Area in acres ...	46,507	49,595	50,005	49,066		
Area in acres under plant ...	21,063	21,036	22,886	21,413		
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...	9,811,139	11,568,622	13,048,187	14,002,735		
Labour force ...	34,270	29,796	22,825	24,126		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	1,196	...	1,364	907		
TOTAL DISTRICT.						
Number of gardens ..	132	129	124	124		
Area in acres ...	182,420	187,968	191,807	207,820		
Area in acres under plant {						
Held by Europeans.	68,279	68,149	69,527	72,497		
Held by Natives.	4,009	3,760	4,013			
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs. ...	31,277,810	32,079,103	37,067,488	38,838,365		
Labour force ...	104,343	96,466	79,794	79,397		
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)	2,947	(b)	3,270	2,777		

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

(b) Figures not available.

Table VI—concl'd.
Crop statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres under plant ...						
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a) ...						
TOTAL DISTRICT.						
Number of gardens ...						
Area in acres ...						
Area in acres { Held by under plant { Euro- peans Held by Natives.						
Outturn of manufac- tured tea in lbs. ...						
Labour force ...						
Labourers including dependents imported during the year(a)						

(a) From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VII.
Reserved Forests.

Name of reserve.	Area in square miles.	Character of forests.	RECEIPTS.											
			1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Langai	80	Mixed evergreen forest, dense undergrowth, canes and creepers abundant, interspersed with swampy areas. The predominant species are Oham, Poma, Bate, Jarul, Ping, Jam &c.	Rs. 12,803	Rs. 16,322	Rs. 10,962	Rs. 7,946	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	
Slungia	23			Rs. 1,331	Rs. 1,185	Rs. 653								

TABLE VIII.

TABLE VIII.
Outturn of timber and fuel and value of minor forest produce.

DETAILS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
RESERVED FORESTS—												
Area in square miles	103	103	103	103								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)—												
Timber (o. ft.)	36,110	83,302	48,684	50,157								
Fuel (o. ft.)	8	204	88	198								
UNCLASSIFIED STATE FORESTS—												
Area in square miles	211	196	179	177								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)—												
Timber (o. ft.)	42,476	39,427	72,732	100,310								
Fuel (o. ft.)	163,449	137,800	184,594	165,463								
Forest receipts	59,041	69,424	68,090	70,425	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Forest expenditure	17,069	21,968	22,781	20,637								
Surplus or deficit	+41,972	+37,456	+45,809	+49,788								

TABLE IX.
Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

	SYLHET TOWN.			SUNAMGANJ.			HABIGANJ.			MAULAVI BAZAR.			KARIMGANJ.		
	Common rice.	Salt.	Mattikhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mattikhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mattikhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mattikhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mattikhal.
1880 { 2nd week of February	14	84	16	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
" " August	19½	9½	21	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
" " February	16	9½	15	16	8	16	16	8½	16	20	8	18	16	9½	16
1890 { " " August	12½	10	17½	20	8	13½	14	9	16	13	8	18	12	9	16½
" " February	18½	10½	16	16	9	13	20	10	16	20	10½	16	17½	10½	18
1900 { " " August	16	10½	13½	13	9	13	16	10	13	14	10½	13	16	10½	16
" " February	10	10	12½	10	9	13	11	10	13	11	10	11½	12	10½	13½
1901 { " " August	10	10	12½	10	9½	12½	10	10	14	9	10	13	10	10	13
" " February	16½	10	13½	14	9	13	13	10	14	17	10½	13	16	10½	16
1902 { " " August	13½	10½	13½	14	10	13	12	10	13	14	11	13	12	10½	13
" " February	13½	10½	13½	12½	10½	13	12½	10½	13½	14	11	13	13	10½	12½
1903 { " " August	13½	12½	13½	16	12½	13	13	11½	15½	13½	13	14	11	11	13
" " February	17½	12½	13	17	13½	13½	16	12½	13½	19	12½	13	15	12	13
1904 { " " August	17½	13	16	19	13½	14	15	12½	13½	17	12½	13	15	12½	14
" " February	17½	12½	16	18	12½	14	17	13	13½	18	12½	12	15½	13	13
1905 { " " August	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..

TABLE IX—concl'd.
Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

		SYLHET TOWN.			SUNAMGANJ.			HABIGANJ.			MAULAYI BAZAR.			KARINGANJ.		
		Common rice.	Salt.	Matkhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matkhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matkhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matkhal.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matkhal.
1906 {	2nd week of February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1907 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1908 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1909 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1910 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1911 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
1912 {	" February	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
"	" August	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

TABLE X.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION.																				
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																				
Number of cases.																				
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	48	31	14	13	8	8														
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	2	1	3	1	6	3														
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide Secs. 302-304, 307, 308, and 396	3	2	9	3	5	1														
...																				

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION—contd.																						
ORIGINAL JUSTICE.																						
Number of cases.																						
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 336 ...	12	4	10	7	20	6																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357 ...	4	3	4	...	3	2																
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	5	1	2	...	10	4																
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398 ...	...	...	...	...	1	1																

TABLE X.

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	37	31	23	16	12	9																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	1	1	1	...	6	5																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308, and 396 ...	5	2	4	1	5	2																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333, and 335 ...	5	5	15	5	14	2																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357 ...	3	3	2	2	6	3																

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	
HABIGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
Number of cases:																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	54	45	35	35	35	31																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	4	3	6	...	4	4																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302 to 304, 307, 308 and 396 ...	8	2	12	5	8	6																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	25	15	26	18	12	11																

TABLE X.

(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 363, 364, 366 and 367.	2	2	4	2	9	5
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	9	5	4	...	4	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398	2	1	...	...	2	...
(viii) Serious mischief including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 370, 381, 382, 488, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	25	4	17	1	8	1
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	132	7	193	4	161	8
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	14	5	10	1	6	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property ...	9	5	1	...	1	1
(xii) Theft. ... Secs. 379 to 382	114	44	125	49	75	85
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	13	10	25	24	30	16
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447, and 448 ...	32	16	39	13	34	10
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	5	3	3	...	2	1
Total ...	448	167	500	152	381	131

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	27	19	9	6	16	9																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	2	2	4	4	7	1																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 309 ...	10	2	8	5	2	1																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	15	5	19	9	22	9																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357 ...	...	...	5	2	6	2																

TABLE X.

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SUNAMGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-163, 157, 158 and 159 ...	37	31	23	16	12	9																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	1	1	1	...	6	5																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308, and 396 ...	5	2	4	1	5	2																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333, and 335 ...	5	5	15	5	14	2																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 363, 364, 366 and 367 ...	3	3	2	2	6	3																

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
HEADS OF CRIME.																						
HABIGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	54	45	35	35	35	31																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	4	3	6	...	4	4																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302 to 304, 307, 308 and 396 ...	8	2	12	5	8	6																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	25	15	26	13	12	11																

TABLE X.

(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357.	2	2	4	2	9	5
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ...	9	5	4	...	4	2
(vii) Dacoity. Secs. 395, 397 and 398	2	1	...	...	2	...
(viii) Serious mischief including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal. Secs. 370, 281, 282, 498, 429, 430-433 and 435-440.	25	4	17	1	8	1
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Secs. 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	133	7	193	4	161	8
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Secs. 341-344	14	5	10	1	6	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property ...	9	5	1	...	1	1
(xii) Theft. ... Secs. 379 to 382	114	44	125	49	75	85
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Secs. 411 and 414	13	10	25	24	20	16
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Secs. 453, 456, 447, and 448 ...	32	16	39	13	34	10
(xv) Other minor offences against property ...	5	3	3	...	2	1
Total ...	448	167	500	152	381	131

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	
SOUTH SYLHET SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 148-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	27	19	9	6	16	9																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	2	2	4	4	7	1																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 306 ...	10	2	8	5	2	1																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	15	5	19	9	22	9																
(v) Serious criminal force Secs. 363, 364, 366 and 367 ...	...	...	5	2	6	2																

Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
KARIMGANJ SUB-DIVISION.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	26	17	33	26	13	13																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	1	1	5	4	4	2																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 306	1	1	6	1	5	2																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	11	5	14	8	15	7																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 355 and 357	4	2	1	...	3	1																
...																						

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Table X—contd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.		1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL.																						
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
<i>Number of cases.</i>																						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Secs. 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	192	143	114	96	84	65																
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	10	8	19	9	27	15																
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Secs. 302-304, 307, 308 and 398 ...	27	9	39	15	25	12																
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Secs. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ...	68	34	90	42	83	35																
(v) Serious criminal force. Secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357 ...	13	10	16	6	27	13																

Table X—concl'd.
Statistics of criminal and civil justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
CIVIL JUSTICE.											
Suits for money and movables ...	12,234	11,366									
Title and other suits ...	3,046	3,311									
Rent suits ...	4,085	4,229									
Total ...	19,375	18,908									

TABLE XI.
Finance—Receipts.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary)	6,34,108	7,76,800	7,82,009	9,12,266	9,42,448								
" " (miscellaneous)	42,380	61,061	67,916	72,499	69,396								
Provincial rates	2,15,374	2,25,895	2,26,166	2,74,490	2,37,415								
Judicial stamps	2,26,721	3,86,128	2,92,102	4,22,787	4,04,169								
Non-Judicial stamps	1,23,076	1,43,475	1,44,878	1,64,850	1,51,623								
Opium	45,431	28,496	18,213	22,045	24,877								
Country spirits	64,835	1,10,676	94,591	90,773	1,05,729								
Ganja	1,11,675	1,19,896	1,12,950	1,23,096	1,27,105								
Other heads of excise	2,469	8,357	8,222	2,846	2,997								
Assessed taxes	60,546	71,074	70,070	70,753	83,319								
No. of assesses per thousand	1	1	1	1	....								
Forests	40,065	59,041	59,424	68,090	70,425								
Registration	22,577	42,490	41,003	51,823	53,709								
TOTAL	17,10,315	20,23,329	20,12,264	22,77,987	21,37,406								

TABLE XII.
Miscellaneous land revenue.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	18,354	25,557	26,636	25,835								
Total revenue	19,551	26,397	28,733	26,535								
SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	8,312	6,440	5,466	5,144								
Total revenue	8,395	6,440	5,466	5,144								
HABIGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	11,852	13,600	12,573	14,127								
Total revenue	12,374	14,414	13,203	14,559								
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	1,297	1,922	2,160	475								
Total revenue	2,698	3,433	3,598	975								
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Fisheries	16,945	16,465	20,075	15,548								
Total revenue	17,943	17,272	21,498	16,483								
TOTAL DISTRICT.												
Fisheries	56,640	63,984	66,910	61,129								
Other heads	4,491	3,973	5,589	2,166								
Total revenue	61,061	67,956	72,499	63,295								

TABLE XIII.
Land tenures.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.
NORTH-SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	345,536	345,485	345,472	347,866								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	230,236	238,109	239,036	230,252								
Held on ordinary tenure	212,296	219,496	220,414	211,752								
Held revenue free	18,640	18,613	18,613	18,500								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	17,773	17,773	17,773	16,533								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec.I of Settlement rules ..	11,578	11,578	11,578	11,538								
Area settled under other special rules	6,195	6,195	6,195	5,004								
Total settled area of the subdivi- sion	894,346	801,367	603,371	594,650								
Total unsettled area of the subdivi- sion	80,966	73,833	73,929	80,550								
SUNAMGANJ SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	830,123	830,045	839,848	830,383								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	31,483	31,611	32,024	30,449								
Held on ordinary tenure	30,529	30,657	31,070	29,496								
Held revenue free	964	954	954	954								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples .. ..	.....	.....	1	.....								
Area settled under other special rules .. ..	.....	.....	1	.....								
Total settled area of the subdivi- sion	861,615	861,646	861,873	860,733								
Total unsettled area of the subdivi- sion	93,906	93,864	93,647	94,788								

Table XIII—contd.
Land tenures.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
HARGANS SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	555,373	555,373	555,371	555,463								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	17,458	17,937	19,544	19,286								
Held on ordinary tenure	13,876	13,376	14,003	14,735								
Held revenue free	4,582	4,561	4,541	4,551								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	10,482	10,483	10,482	19,324								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	8,405	8,403	8,403	9,249								
Area settled under other special rules	2,077	2,077	2,077	11,886								
Total settled area of the subdivision	583,282	583,781	584,407	594,583								
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	36,078	36,579	34,953	44,777								
SOUTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION.												
Permanently settled	392,349	392,349	392,316	392,331								
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.												
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	48,794	50,894	53,035	52,085								
Held on ordinary tenure	38,461	40,561	41,702	41,753								
Held revenue free	10,333	10,333	10,333	10,332								
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	31,471	36,400	31,766	38,999								
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	48,080	50,969	54,333	31,150								
Area settled under other special rules	23,441	34,441	35,433	52,543								
Total settled area of the subdivision	437,614	438,643	426,146	428,909								
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	114,986	108,937	101,454	108,691								

TABLE XII.

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KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION.					
Permanently settled	384,156	384,156	384,154	384,576	
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.					
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	50,354	56,082	57,694	54,312	
Held on ordinary tenure	46,970	52,798	54,410	53,028	
Held revenue free	3,384	3,284	3,284	3,284	
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples	59,453	60,505	60,505	54,765	
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878	
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	39,834	40,391	40,391	41,741	
Area settled under other special rules	17,941	18,236	18,236	11,146	
Total settled area of the subdivision	493,863	500,743	503,383	495,652	
Total unsettled area of the subdivision	176,857	169,977	168,267	175,068	
TOTAL DISTRICT.					
Permanently settled	2,407,545	2,407,407	2,407,190	2,411,018	
TEMPORARILY SETTLED.					
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	378,895	394,622	399,323	388,384	
Held on ordinary tenure	341,132	356,868	361,599	350,762	
Held revenue free	37,763	37,754	37,724	37,622	
Total land settled for cultivation of special crops	169,179	174,160	180,527	74,124	
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants	1,878	1,878	1,878	1,878	
Area settled under rules of 1876 and Sec. I of Settlement rules ..	107,847	111,233	116,607	92,668	
Area settled under other special rules	59,454	61,049	62,043	80,578	
Total settled area of the district	2,955,619	2,976,190	2,987,080	2,974,526	
Total unsettled area of the district	522,781	502,210	491,350	503,374	

NOTE.—The areas under different classes of estates have been revised and hence do not agree with those shown in the printed reports.

TABLE XIV.

TABLE XIV.
Excise.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
NORTH SYLHET SUBDIVISION—												
No. of opium shops	6	5	6	5								
Amount paid for licenses	2,166	2,664	2,502	2,796								
Quantity of opium issued	md srs	md srs	md srs	md srs oh								
Duty on opium sold	5 26	4 38	5 22	6 2 0								
No. of ganja shops	6,726	6,643	6,612	6,597								
Amount paid for licenses	13	17	17	18								
Quantity of ganja issued	10,818	7,990	8,490	10,528								
Duty on ganja sold	md srs	md srs ch	md srs	md srs ch								
No. of country spirit shops	39 35	34 27 8	44 8	43 34 12								
Amount paid for licenses	11,630	10,437	13,352	13,731								
No. of distilleries	20,123	15,963	14,782	20,798								
Quantity of liquor issued	..	..	..	..								
Still-based duty	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses	..	..	..	..								
Other heads of excise revenue	686	1,348	1,128	748								
SURUNGAM SUBDIVISION—												
No. of opium shops	2	2	2	2								
Amount paid for licenses	690	692	972	702								
Quantity of opium issued	md srs	md srs	md srs	md srs oh								
Duty on opium sold	1 12	1 5	1 3	1 11 0								
No. of ganja shops	1,482	1,282	1,226	1,453								
Amount paid for licenses	14	14	13	13								
Quantity of ganja issued	8,178	8,398	6,996	7,766								
Duty on ganja sold	md srs	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch								
No. of country spirit shops	28 18	21 1 4	28 29 12	27 16 10								
Amount paid for licenses	6,602	5,892	7,649	7,109								
No. of distilleries	5,534	5,076	4,883	5,596								
Quantity of liquor issued	..	..	..	..								
Still-based duty	..	..	..	..								

TABLE XIV.

[illegible]

TABLE XIV—concl'd.
Excise.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
KARIMGANJ SUBDIVISION—												
No. of opium shops ..	16	16	16	10								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 2,737	Rs. 1,090	Rs. 1,806	Rs. 1,764								
Quantity of opium issued ..	md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch
Duty on opium sold ..	6 23 n 4 36	7 15 8 7 0	8 4 0 8 9,320	8 4 0 8 9,320								
No. of ganja shops ..	21	21	21	21								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 9,968	Rs. 9,968	Rs. 9,073	Rs. 9,336								
Quantity of ganja issued ..	md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch
Duty on ganja sold ..	46 35 8 38 34	47 9 13,921	47 9 13,921	47 9 13,921								
No. of country spirit shops ..	13,838	10,887	13,903	12,840								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 14,931	Rs. 15,536	Rs. 13,903	Rs. 12,840								
No. of distilleries ..	..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued ..	..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..								
Other heads of excise revenue ..	Rs. 1,560	Rs. 966	Rs. 1,128	Rs. 908								
TOTAL DISTRICT—												
No. of opium shops ..	38	37	37	31								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 6,965	Rs. 5,561	Rs. 5,737	Rs. 6,267								
Quantity of opium issued ..	md srs ch	md srs	md srs	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch
Duty on opium sold ..	14 33 0 11 23	16 8 16 18 0	17,328 13,610	17,328 13,610								
No. of ganja shops ..	89	88	88	98								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 57,422	Rs. 53,463	Rs. 51,062	Rs. 56,641								
Quantity of ganja issued ..	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch	md srs ch
Duty on ganja sold ..	335 13 12 138 24 6	340 0 4 333 20 6	340 0 4 333 20 6	340 0 4 333 20 6								
No. of country spirit shops ..	43	47	48	47								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. 63,474	Rs. 59,467	Rs. 72,034	Rs. 70,964								
No. of distilleries ..	..	..	..	..								
Quantity of liquor issued ..	..	..	..	..								
Still-head duty ..	..	..	..	..								
No. of retail shops ..	..	..	..	..								
Amount paid for licenses ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..	Rs. ..								
Other heads of excise revenue ..	Rs. 3,857	Rs. 3,622	Rs. 3,946	Rs. 3,997								

Table XV.
Income and expenditure of Local Boards.
North Sylhet.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	49,859	52,550	Post office ...	3,512	3,618
Police ...	2,660	5,662	Administration ...	205	205
Tolls on ferries ...	8,925	9,778	Education ...	10,750	19,068
Contributions ...	7,200	10,995	Medical ...	3,497	6,769
Debt ...	—	2,959	Civil works ...	36,687	59,144
Miscellaneous ...	189	34	Debt ...	133	215
			Miscellaneous ...	299	809
TOTAL ...	68,783	81,978	TOTAL ...	55,083	89,823

Sunamganj.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91	1900-01		1890-91	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs	Rs.
Provincial rates ..	37,217	37,378	Post office ...	5,157	4,736
Police ...	2,334	3,751	Administration ...	138	151
Tolls on ferries ...	2,407	3,381	Education ...	8,474	11,606
Contributions ..	1,183	3,435	Medical ...	2,226	5,126
Debt ...	...	4,060	Civil works ...	19,427	22,606
Miscellaneous ...	153	641	Debt ...	...	5,257
			Miscellaneous ...	781	2,308
TOTAL ...	43,294	52,626	TOTAL ...	36,203	51,790

Table XV—contd.
Income and expenditure of Local Boards.
Habiganj.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	55,333	56,326	Post office ...	3,759	4,212
Police ...	4,100	5,609	Administration ...	211	323
Tolls on ferries ...	3,435	4,352	Education ...	13,685	19,326
Contributions ...	...	2,160	Medical ...	4,937	5,443
Debt ...	...	6,615	Civil works ...	29,955	44,301
Miscellaneous ...	235	57	Debt ...	...	6,616
			Contributions ...	205	...
			Miscellaneous ...	250	445
TOTAL ...	63,103	75,119	TOTAL ...	53,002	80,566

South Sylhet.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	36,191	37,423	Post office ..	3,165	1,416
Police ...	3,175	5,036	Administration ...	130	130
Tolls on ferries ...	6,700	7,287	Education ...	13,866	20,277
Contributions ...	16,600	21,600	Medical ...	3,526	9,092
Debt ...	...	3,457	Civil works ...	23,804	36,117
Miscellaneous ...	171	480	Debt ...	...	3,418
			Miscellaneous ...	85	1,900
TOTAL ...	62,837	75,233	TOTAL ...	49,576	72,350

Table XV—concl'd.
Income and expenditure of Local Boards,
Karimganj.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	40,493	44,390	Post office ...	3,760	945
Police ...	1,820	2,875	Administration ...	146	146
Tolls on ferries ...	10,683	11,575	Education ...	9,180	12,494
Contributions ...	4,000	17,607	Medical ...	3,316	7,944
Debt ...	...	3,391	Civil works ...	34,031	52,125
Miscellaneous ...	129	91	Debt ...	...	3,391
			Contributions ...	...	1,690
			Miscellaneous ...	1,279	1,194
TOTAL ...	57,125	79,929	TOTAL ...	51,712	79,929

TABLE XVI.
Income and expenditure of Municipality
and Union.

SYLHET MUNIOIPALITY.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91	1900-01		1890-91	1900-01.
	Rs.	Ra.		Rs.	Ra.
SYLHET MUNIOIPALITY.					
Opening balance ...	3,500	2,362	Administration ...	2,799	2,464
Taxes on houses and lands ...	4,926	1,191	Conservancy ...	5,108	6,907
Pounds ...	1,760	671	Public works ...	5,499	4,412
Tax on persons ...	.....	6,036	Public instructions	565	718
			Drainage ...	868	1,093
Tolls on roads and ferries ...	6,915	6,342	Other heads ...	4,947	4,507
Conservancy ...	2,621	3,437	Closing balance	603	925
Other sources ...	667	987			
TOTAL ...	20,389	21,026	TOTAL ...	20,389	21,026

HABIGANJ UNION.

Opening balance ...	110	4,751	Administration ..	402	504
Tax on houses and lands ...	784	132	Conservancy ...	437	3,024
Pounds ...	956	1,104	Police	1,051	795
Fees from markets	975	.....	Public works ...	108	510
Grants from Provincial and Local Funds	...	1,000	Public instructions	52	196
Tax on persons ...	...	1,544	Drainage ...	20	275
Tolls on roads and ferries ...	426	1,230	Other heads ...	1,302	1,321
Other sources ...	128	278	Closing balance ..	7	3,414
TOTAL ...	3,379	10,039	TOTAL ...	3,379	10,039

TABLE XVII.
Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.	1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.			
SUPERVISING STAFF.			
District and Assistant Super-			
intendents	1	1	2
Inspectors	5	6	6
SUBORDINATE STAFF.			
Sub Inspectors	16	15	27
Head Constables	54	74	58
Constables	336	450	527
Rural Police	4,376	5,611	5,318
Union and Municipal Police	32	7	7
Total expenditure ... Rs.	2,28,685	3,43,538	3,74,885

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XVIII.

Police Stations and Out-posts in 1904.

NAME OF POLICE STATIONS.		SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
		Sub In- spector.	Head Con- stables	Con- stables.	Total.
North Sylhet.	Balaganj P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Biswanath O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Fenchuganj O. P. ...	...	1	2	3
	Golapganj O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Goyainghat O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Jaintia O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
	Kanairghat P. S. ...	1	...	8	9
	Sylhet P. S. ...	3	...	12	15
	Do Town O. P. ...	1	...	38	39
Sunamganj.	Ohlatak P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Dharmapasha P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Dirai P. S. ...	1	1	8	10
	Jagannathpur, O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Sunamganj P. S. ...	2	...	12	14
	Tahirpur O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
Habiganj.	Abidabad O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Baniyachung P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Habiganj P. S. ...	4	...	16	20
	Lakhai O. P. ...	1	...	4	5
	Madhabpur P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Muchikandi O. P. ...	2	...	8	10
	Nubiganj P. S. ...	2	...	10	12
South Sylhet.	Kamalganj P. S. ...	1	1	12	14
	Kulaura P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Maulavi Bazar P. S. ...	2	...	14	16
	Rajnagar O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Srimangal O. P. ...	2	...	6	8
Karimganj.	Jaldhub P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Karimganj P. S. ...	3	1	16	20
	Patharkandi O. P. ...	1	...	5	6
	Ratabari O. P. ...	1	...	5	6

TABLE XIX.
Statistics of Jails.
Sylhet Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male ...	513·83	356·29	540·21
	{ Female ...	12·20	6·88	5·68
Rate of mortality per 1,000	...	17 Rs.	80 Rs.	33 Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	36,722	25,544	42,372
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	36	38	53
Profits on jail manufacture	...	8,933	5,806	—814
Earnings per prisoner †	...	17	18	—2

Sunamganj Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male ...	21·61	20·64	29·23
	{ Female ...	·08	·01	·08
Rate of mortality per 1,000	...	92 Rs.	97 Rs.	34 Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	1,440	1,419	1,806
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	25	28	49
Profits on jail manufacture	...	166	370	1,125
Earnings per prisoner †	...	9	23	52

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

Table XIX—contd.
Statistics of Jail.
Habiganj Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	29·24	30·55	51·63
	Female ...	·34	·08	·81
Rate of mortality per 1,000	...	34	33	.....
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	1,882	2,029	1,710
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	28	37	24
Profits on jail manufacture	...	125	228	1,068
Earnings per prisoner †	... ..	5	11	22

South Sylhet Subsidiary Jail.

		1883.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	13·64	20·15	23·99
	Female ...	·20	·12	·40
Rate of mortality per 1,000	...	...	49	...
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	1,138	1,513	1,509
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	27	31	45
Profits on jail manufacture	...	40	196	208
Earnings per prisoner †	... ..	4	12	13

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

Table XIX—concl'd.
Statistics of Jail.
Karimganj Subsidiary Jail.

	1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population { Male ...	1839	17·87	30·92
{ Female ...	·03	...	·46
Rate of mortality per 1000 ...	54	...	...
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...	1,488	1,298	1,359
Cost per prisoner * (excluding civil prisoners) ...	80	29	31
Profits on jail manufacture ...	592	248	263
Earnings per prisoner† ...	27	19	11

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XX.

TABLE XX.
Education.

	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
COLLEGES.												
Number	1	1	1	1								
Number of boys	49	40	37	29								
Number of passing F. A. ..	13	8	9	14								
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.												
<i>High Schools—</i>												
Number	7	7	7	7								
Number of boys reading in High School classes ..	518	493	442	564								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes ..	450	458	507	507								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ..	633	741	883	907								
<i>Middle English Schools—</i>												
Number	46	42	43	43								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes ..	383	379	335	321								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ..	2,911	2,586	2,632	2,757								
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools—</i>												
Number	15	15	15	14								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes ..	155	133	97	103								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes ..	653	748	801	737								

TABLE XX.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.									
<i>Upper Primary Schools—</i>									
Number	..	..	..	4	47	41	38		
Number of boys reading in Upper Primary classes	..	..	..	333	323	232	199		
Number of boys reading in Lower Primary classes	..	..	..	1,474	1,486	1,380	1,328		
<i>Lower Primary Schools—</i>									
Number	..	..	..	833	835	804	751		
Number of boys reading in three upper classes	..	..	..	(a)	(a)	10,070	9,228		
Number of boys reading in lower classes	..	..	..	28,808	27,474	15,907	15,959		
FEMALE EDUCATION.									
Number of girls' Schools	..	..	..	137	125	104	83		
Number of girls reading (whether in girls' or boys' Schools) in—									
High Schools	..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
Middle English School	..	..	..	..	2	..	..		
Middle Vernacular Schools	..	..	..	..	..	1	..		
Upper Primary Schools	..	..	..	48	59	40	18		
Lower Primary Schools	..	..	..	3,648	3,414	2,527	1,810		

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XXI.
Educational Finance.

PARTICULARS.	No. of Institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM					Expenditure per head of scholar.		
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	Rs.	As.	P.
Training and Special Schools ...	8	.....	1,382	1,457	2,060	4,899	7	4	8
<i>Secondary Boys' Schools—</i>									
Upper (High) ...	7	7,363	.....	23,454	2,764	33,581	21	11	6
Lower (Middle) ...	61	1,564	17,376	16,531	13,357	47,718	12	5	10
<i>Primary Boys' Schools—</i>									
Upper ...	47	.....	5,176	3,575	2,498	11,249	6	5	2
Lower ...	833	.....	45,340	16,158	1,731	63,239	2	2	7
Girls' Schools ...	137		4,802	4		4,806	2	7	5
TOTAL ...	1,083	8,917	73,976	59,179	22,410	1,64,482	4	4	3

TABLE XXII.

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TABLE XXII.

Medical.

PARTICULARS.	North Sylhet subdivision.			Sunamganj subdivision.			Habiganj subdivision.		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Number of dispensaries ..	1	8	10	1	6	6	1	7	7
Daily average of in-door patients ..	6.06	17.11	20.67	....	96	2.08	....	....	2.56
Daily average of out-door patients ..	47.17	212.38	282.16	4.17	94.77	118.24	8.91	89.45	198.62
Cases treated	7,659	49,755	58,131	1,526	19,051	29,558	1,098	21,244	42,527
Operations performed	249	1,177	2,251	32	682	817	4	890	1,535
Total income Rs.	1,866	15,328	21,102	380	6,539	9,772	287	6,246	10,323
Income from Government Rs.	977	2,729	4,573	49	1,815	1,307	42	1,338	1,432
Income from Local and Municipal funds Rs.	315	6,084	8,758	....	2,398	4,756	....	4,026	4,510
Subscriptions Rs.	499	566	794	268	360	492	209	423	823
Total expenditure Rs.	1,756	15,184	20,816	335	6,419	9,548	302	6,116	10,042
Expenditure on establishment Rs.	1,055	4,629	6,157	171	2,328	3,075	100	2,962	3,416
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated .. ..	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....
Cost per case .. Rs.	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....	....

PARTICULARS.	South Sylhet subdivision.			Karimganj subdivision.			Total District.		
	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901	1881	1891	1901
Number of dispensaries ..		6	10	1	7	10	4	34	43
Daily average of in-door patients ..		1.04	1.65	....	2.38	3.35	6.06	21.49	31.26
Daily average of out-door patients ..		136.18	351.76	9.22	178.66	220.70	69.47	711.39	1,171.48
Cases treated		22,113	(a) 56,877	5,369	40,619	42,998	13,552	152,782	(a) 330,091
Operations performed		944	1,888	105	1,107	1,577	390	4,300	8,068
Total income Rs.		10,906	19,470	320	7,127	13,781	2,923	46,146	74,448
Income from Government Rs.		1,318	1,702	84	1,733	2,106	1,109	9,932	11,020
Income from Local and Municipal funds Rs.		4,313	7,341	102	5,133	6,841	417	19,954	32,100
Subscriptions Rs.		595	1,407	154	275	631	1,130	2,209	4,152
Total expenditure Rs.		10,705	19,106	318	6,693	12,937	2,711	46,117	72,449
Expenditure on establishment Rs.		2,653	5,063	116	2,584	4,665	1,442	16,056	22,396
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated							(b) 0.80	10.67	30.11
Cost per case .. Rs.								0-1.4	0-1.0

(a) Excludes 905 persons treated in the private dispensary at Maulavi Bazar.
 (b) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE XXIII.
Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Sylhet ..	8,956	10,596	6,095	12,223	5,077	14,070	6,467	14,498	6,528	14,022				
Sylhet (Municipal)	1,151	8,574	1,148	8,532	1,159	8,364	1,393	7,655	1,840	8,327				
Balaganj ...	2,028	5,304	1,695	5,190	1,125	5,274	1,292	5,461	1,325	5,926				
Fenchuganj ..	1,584	6,054	1,657	5,835	1,370	8,815	1,507	9,182	1,398	8,555				
Jaintiapur ..	1,794	5,516	1,772	5,802	1,239	6,205	2,053	6,843	1,150	7,321				
Kanaighat ..	2,419	6,016	2,333	5,608	872	6,369	904	5,536	926	5,214				
Goyainghat ...	1,469	4,325	1,570	5,672	932	6,169	985	6,065	790	5,724				
Dighi ..	2,052	3,906	1,761	4,221	846	4,853	1,003	4,864	1,017	4,982				
Thakurbari ..	1,776	4,930	1,464	5,306	1,037	6,301	1,432	6,221	1,257	6,838				
Sunamganj ..	2,168	6,924	2,711	7,850	1,522	7,991	938	8,664	1,333	8,370				
Ohhatak ..	1,553	8,682	1,538	9,090	1,227	8,396	1,531	8,101	1,657	7,927				
Jagannathpur ..	1,023	5,867	1,250	5,244	1,233	5,671	976	6,640	1,082	6,337				
Tahirpur ...	806	2,506	1,420	1,511	862	2,382	1,807	2,537	820	3,103				
Dirai ..	1,325	3,321	1,433	2,838	1,035	3,556	970	4,427	924	5,557				
Madhyanager ...	1,189	3,118	1,195	3,025	900	3,783	691	3,314	582	5,470				
Habiganj ..	5,085	8,555	2,370	11,586	3,039	13,118	2,429	12,923	2,120	13,729				
Baniyachung ..	1,677	5,317	1,623	7,379	1,240	8,664	1,297	8,917	1,568	8,310				
Muchikandi ..	1,536	5,271	1,065	5,206	748	5,228	1,040	5,054	909	5,224				
Nabiganj ..	1,044	3,338	967	2,906	1,623	3,524	1,508	4,174	1,093	5,141				
Jalsuka ..	931	3,725	1,038	4,262	937	4,377	1,094	5,040	804	4,902				
Jagadispur ..	1,479	4,341	1,608	4,707	908	4,505	1,134	5,176	899	4,931				
Babul Bazar ..	1,262	5,749	1,370	6,481	1,015	6,985	1,057	5,907	1,087	6,803				
Maulavi Bazar ..	2,970	3,214	2,984	8,821	1,494	10,702	1,413	12,208	1,616	13,533				
Panchgaon ..	1,797	3,338	1,737	4,013	1,396	3,970	1,046	3,982	1,017	4,475				
Rabir Bazar ..	1,622	10,425	1,538	11,054	1,217	11,534	1,303	12,292	1,567	13,168				
Srimangal ..	1,990	4,000	2,955	4,664	2,671	5,013	1,108	6,618	1,217	6,240				

Table XXIII—contd.
Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Sylhet												
Sylhet (Municipal)												
Balaganj												
Fenchuganj												
Jaiutiapur												
Kanairghat												
Goyainghat												
Digli												
Thakurbari												
Sunamganj												
Chhatak												
Jagannathpur												
Tahirpur												
Dirai												
Madhyanagar												
Habiganj												
Baniyachung												
Muchikandi												
Nabiganj												
Jalsuka												
Jagadisipur												
Bahubal Bazar												
Maulavi Bazar												
Panchgaon												
Rabir Bazar												
Srimangal												

Table XXIII—contd.

Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.		1906.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Kamalganj ..	2,173	5,019	1,765	5,375	845	5,432	1,135	5,222	942	6,474				
Manomukh ..	2,014	3,800	1,424	4,000	841	4,692	980	6,031	970	7,340				
Indeswar ..	1,656	2,409	1,824	3,484	884	2,464	939	2,853	1,036	2,616				
Munshibazar ...	1,764	3,398	1,887	3,542	990	4,637	1,096	5,682	1,070	8,987				
Shamsherganj ...	1,330	3,140	1,902	3,679	738	5,277	1,706	5,624	1,368	6,874				
Kulaura ..	1,308	4,272	1,091	8,245	770	9,729	1,250	10,029	1,551	10,136				
Karimganj ..	2,091	4,515	1,767	6,013	1,522	7,109	935	8,049	1,029	8,468				
Atgram ..	1,362	3,580	1,251	3,379	743	3,616	774	4,379	1,020	4,014				
Bhanga ..	1,412	6,705	1,519	6,952	1,360	6,818	1,111	8,189	1,690	8,336				
Bianibazar ..	1,583	6,262	1,611	6,121	1,191	6,079	1,450	6,167	1,602	6,024				
Patharkandi ..	1,635	3,330	1,303	3,248	732	3,514	809	3,406	670	1,090				
Tilpara ..	...	...	..	..	..	...	...	..	463	2,327				
Latu ..	1,550	2,593	905	2,908	825	2,968	729	3,230	879	3,840				
Nilam Bazar ..	1,737	4,433	1,348	4,383	755	4,114	1,092	3,611	951	4,528				
Barlekha ..	1,236	3,710	1,402	4,467	815	4,085	1,603	2,893	1,006	4,605				
Qhargola ..	942	3,839	936	3,169	939	3,028	962	4,323	967	5,483				
Kaliganj ..	..	..	..	..	794	4,110	1,085	5,489	1,305	5,988				

Table XXIII—concl'd.
Dispensaries.

Name of Dispensary.	1907.		1908.		1909.		1910.		1911.		1912.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Kamalganj												
Manumukh												
Indeswar												
Munshibazar												
Shamsherganj												
Kulaura												
Karimganj												
Atgram												
Bhanga												
Bianibazar												
Patharkandi												
Tilpara												
Lata												
Nilam Bazar												
Barlekha												
Ohargola												
Kaliganj												

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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME III

GOALPARA

BY

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Calcutta :

PRINTED AT THE CITY PRESS,
12, BENTINCK STREET.

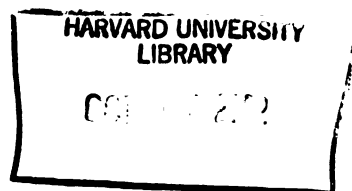
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Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



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PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Goalpara is nothing more than a general description of the district as a whole, and does not, as Gazetteers generally do, include a directory. There are, however, hardly any places in the district which are worthy of the name of town, and the little villages in which the people live do not call for a separate and detailed description. Places which are centres of local trade or of some industry have been specified by name, but to attempt to describe each of these villages would merely have resulted in the most tedious iteration. It should be added that the Gazetteer was compiled at a time when Assam was still a separate Province, and that when the Province is mentioned it is to Assam and not to Eastern Bengal and Assam that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

SHILLONG : }
October, 1905. }

B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General aspects—Mountain system—River system—Bils and marshes—Geology—Climate—Winds and Cyclones—Rainfall—Earthquakes—Fauna.

THE district of Goalpara is bounded on the north by Bhutan; on the east by Kamrup; on the south by the Garo Hills; and on the west by the Bengal district of Jalpaiguri, by the native state of Kuch Bihar, and by the Bengal district of Rangpur. It lies between 25°, 28' and 26°, 54' N. and 89°, 42' and 91°, 6' E. and covers an area of 3,954* square miles.

Area and boundaries.

The greater part of Goalpara consists of a level plain, the lower portion of which is intersected by the Brahmaputra. A few outlying spurs of the Assam range project towards the river, and even appear on the north bank, in the Khuntaghat and Parbatjuar parganas. Near the Brahmaputra, much of the country is exposed to flood and is covered by a dense growth of grass and reeds. Further back, the level rises and rice fields take the place of swamps. The houses of the cultivators are buried in dense groves of areca palms, plantains, and bamboos, and at all seasons of the year the country looks fresh and green. The Eastern Duars, at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, is a country of grassy commons

General aspects.

* Revised figures which do not agree with those returned in the Census Report of 1901.

and dark forests. Rice is grown on fields that are irrigated from the hill streams, and here and there the villages of the Meches, the inhabitants of that tract, are to be seen standing up against the sky line. But the Duars are very sparsely populated, and are for the most part covered with jungle grass or forest.

**Mountain
System**

The northern and western portions of the district are absolutely flat. On the east, there are several low ranges projecting from the Garo Hills, which reach right down to the river near Goalpara town, where there are isolated hills projecting above the alluvium from four to seven hundred feet in height. Immediately north of the Brahmaputra, these hills again appear, but they here attain a higher altitude. The Bhairab hill is 1,647 feet above the level of the sea. The Narikola, a little to the east is, 1,146 feet, while the Bao Kumari, the highest peak in a collection of small ranges in the west of the Khuntaghat pargana, is 1,505 feet. The only elevated tract in the Eastern Duars is a low range of hills in the extreme south of the Sidli Duar. These hills all rise sharply from the plain, and, though there are few actual cliffs, their sides are rocky and precipitous. As is only natural in the rainy climate of Assam the summits and sides alike are covered with forest and with bamboo jungle.

**River
System.
The Brahma-
putra.**

The principal river of Goalpara, as of every other district in the Assam Valley, is the Brahmaputra, which flows either through or along the boundary of the district, for a distance of 85 miles. Few rivers allow

themselves greater latitude in their wanderings than the Brahmaputra, as it oscillates from side to side of the sandy strath through which it makes its way. Here it cuts away a great bank, there it throws up a *chur*, which may either be carried away by the next flood, or may grow into a large island covered with grass and reeds. It enters the district on the south bank a few miles below Nagarbera in Kamrup, and on the north bank at the mouth of the Manas, which is nearly opposite the town of Goalpara. Its course through the district is at first from east to west, but after running about sixty-five miles, it turns to the south-west and finally to the south. The river is crossed by the steam ferries which ply between Dhubri and Fakirganj and Goalpara and Jogighopa. Such is the breadth of the river in the rains that the crossing to Barabhitā, about one mile above Fakirganj, takes $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours, though the ferry boat can steam some ten miles an hour in slack water.

The Manas is probably the largest of the rivers which join the Brahmaputra in the Goalpara district. It rises in the Bhutan Hills, and originally formed the boundary between Goalpara and Kamrup, but its channel is subject to frequent changes, and for the greater part of its present course it flows through Goalpara. The principal tributaries are—on the right bank the Makra, Dalani, Ai, Pomajan, Bhandura, and Koija, and on the left bank the Chaulkhoa. The banks are, as a rule, covered with jungle, and the river is not much used as a trade route above its junction with the Ai. Boats of fours tons burthen could, however, go as far as Mokhoa

**The Manas
and Ai.**

at all seasons of the year. The total length of the Manas is about 200 miles. The Ai or Gabharu rises in the Bhutan Hills and flows a tortuous course, first south and then south-east, till it falls into the Manas at the extreme north-east corner of the Khuntaghat pargana. Its principal tributaries are the Buri-Ai and Kana-mukra, both of which join it on the left bank. A boat of four tons burthen can proceed as far as Koliagaon in the rainy and Chamugaon in the dry season; and the river affords a recognised outlet for rice, mustard, thatching grass, and timber.

**The
Champamati
and Saral-
bhanga.**

West of the Manas, the Brahmaputra is joined by the Champamati and the Saralbhanga, which in the lower part of its course takes the name of its principal tributary the Gaurang. Both of these rivers issue from the Bhutan Hills, and when first debouching on the plain, flow over wide stony beds, where the water disappears from time to time in the loose gravelly soil, to re-appear again at some distance further on. In the rainy season the Champamati is navigable by a boat of four tons burthen as far as Garubhasa, and the Saralbhanga as far as Patgaon. The principal tributaries of the Champamati are the Bhoor and the Lopani, both of which join it north of the trunk road. West of the Saralbhanga are the Hail, the Gangia, and the Ranga, which unite to form a stream which, under the name of the Sankosh, falls into the Brahmaputra near Bagribari.

The Sankosh

The greater Sankosh is, however, a much larger river, which forms the boundary between the Ripu Duar and

the Jalpaiguri district of Bengal. At Maktaigaon, it divides into two branches. The western arm retains the name of the original river, and, after flowing through Jalpaiguri and Kuch Bihar, rejoins the eastern branch, which is called the Gangadhar, near Patamari. The combined stream is then known as the Dudhkumar, and falls into the Brahmaputra below Dhubri. For the greater part of its course it flows through jungle land, and is thus not largely used as a trade route, though timber and other forest produce is brought down it. The total length of the river is about 200 miles. About four miles south of Tamarhat, it throws off a channel to the east, which is known as the Gadadhar and falls into the Brahmaputra immediately to the east of Dhubri town. These are, however, but the principal rivers north of the Brahmaputra. The whole of the Eastern Duars is a net work of minor streams and water courses, many of which dry up in the cold season.

West of Goalpara town the drainage of the Garo Hills is carried to the Brahmaputra by the Karnai, the Phulnai, the Kalpani, the Dudhnai, with its tributary the Krishnai, and the Jinari. East of Goalpara, the drainage from the south is first collected in the Jinjiram, which rises in the Urpada *bil* and flows parallel to the Brahmaputra till it joins it a little to the south of Mahendraganj. The Jinjiram is largely used as a trade route, and a boat of four tons burthen can go as far as Singimari in the dry season, and in the rains right up to Lakhipur.

The rivers
on the South
bank.

Bils and marshes.

In the permanently settled portion of the district there are a large number of *bils*, the more considerable of which almost attain the size of lakes. The largest are the Dalni and Tamranga *bils*, which lie at the foot of the Bhairab hills in the Khuntaghat pargana. In the rains, these two *bils* merge into one, and form a magnificent sheet of water from five to six miles long and one or two in breadth. Bounded as they are on the west by a range of precipitous hills about 1,600 feet in height, the appearance of these little lakes is very picturesque. About eight miles further west there is the Dhir *bil*, while the Dhiple *bil*, about three miles further on, is another fine sheet of water, which lies at the foot of the Baokumari hills. South of Goalpara, there is the Urpada *bil*, which almost attains to the dimensions of a lake. Other smaller marshes are the Jaligaur, the Kumaria, the Bakdul, the Digaldubi, the Kishia, the Padmapara, the Kadamtala, and the Hasila.

Geology.

The soil of the plains is composed of sand and clay in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to a clay so stiff as to be quite unfit for cultivation. In the Duars, the soil is for the most part light and gravelly. The hills are of gneissic origin and contain large rocks which would make a good building stone.

Climate.

The climate of Goalpara, as is only natural, differs considerably from that of Upper Assam. The winter is comparatively warm, and in March and April the temperature is fairly high. In the latter month, the

average maximum is nearly 89° , or over 9° more than it is in Dibrugarh. This is, however, the highest maximum for the year, and in no other month does it exceed 86° Fahrenheit. The diurnal range between May and September is very small, and between July and September it is only 8° , as compared with 21° in January. The maximum and minimum temperature of each month at Dhubri will be found in Table I.

The prevailing winds are easterly, but hot winds Winds and Cyclones. blow from the west in the months of March, April, and May. On April 18th 1900, a cyclone of extraordinary violence swept over a portion of the south bank. The storm crossed the trunk road at a point 22 miles, south of Fakirganj. The total area affected in the Goalpara district was a strip of land about five miles long by half a mile in width. In the central portion of the storm path, which was about a quarter of a mile broad, practically everything was demolished. 110 houses were wrecked, 88 persons were injured, two of them fatally, and 30 persons and 33 cattle were killed outright. Many of the killed had their skulls smashed in, and two of them were completely torn to pieces. One of the corpses is said to have been blown right across the Jinjiram river, and carried a distance of more than a quarter of a mile. Trees, too, were uprooted and carried away, one being a banyan tree, nineteen feet in circumference and thirty feet high, which was torn up by the roots and carried along ten yards. Phulerchar and Baroalga were the villages which suffered most severely, eighteen persons being killed in the former, and

ten in the latter. On the following day, there was another violent cyclone which lasted for about ten minutes and followed the same line of country. On this occasion the Goalpara villages escaped with comparatively little injury, but eight persons were killed in the neighbouring district of the Garo Hills.

Rainfall. The average monthly rainfall recorded at Dhubri and at four other stations in the district will be found in Table II. At Dhubri it is only 95 inches in the year, but at Kachugaon, near the Bhutan Hills, it is about 60 inches more. Even at Marnai, which is only about 30 miles north of Dhubri, it is 140 inches. About nine tenths of the total rainfall at Dhubri is precipitated in the five months, May to September. In the four months, November to February, there is only just over one inch of rain. The heavy rainfall in May, which varies from 14 to 20 inches in different parts of the district, is a notable feature in the meteorology of Goalpara.

**Earth
quakes.**

Goalpara, like the rest of Assam, has always been subject to earthquakes. McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a few years previously a village near Goalpara town had been completely swallowed up.* Such was the story told by the people of the neighbourhood, but for its accuracy few would care to vouch. All previous seismic disturbances were, however, insignificant in comparison with the great earthquake of 1897. This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon in the

* Topography of Assam page 74.

south-east to Kangra in the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country, of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The shock occurred at about 5 P.M. on June 12th 1897, and lasted for several minutes. Most of the masonry buildings in the district were wrecked, but *cutcha* structures escaped with comparatively little damage. In Goalpara, the Subdivisional Officer's bungalow, the circuit house, the treasury, the school, and the post and telegraph offices were all demolished. The bazar sank, and the whole of the town went under water; the people being compelled to live like birds on bamboo platforms erected near the roofs of their houses. Substantial dykes have since been constructed, and the town is now protected from inundation in the rains. Serious injury was done to all masonry buildings at Dhubri. The foreshore was broken up by enormous fissures, wells were cracked and filled up with sand, and sand and water spouted from the earth. Fortunately the loss of life was very small, and the total number of casualties was only five. The following extract from a letter written by the Civil Surgeon, gives a graphic description of the effects of the shock south of the Brahmaputra.

At 5 p. m. came this terrible earthquake. I invariably sit out an earthquake, as I have always thought the worst is over before one has time to get outside a house, but though I was safe

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. xxix, p. 52.

enough in the light shanty I was in, I had to rise, as the shock seemed never ending, and a roar of water flowing near and the hum of voices compelled my getting up. The villagers were panic-stricken and fleeing from their houses to the Trunk Road. The ground I at once saw was everywhere cracked up, sunk, etc. Behind the old rest-house is the termination of a very long *bheel*. It was a wonderful sight, this *bheel*. The water rose steadily in it, and in two minutes must have risen at least twelve feet and then overflowed, and with this overflow, the whole country, as far as the eye could see on each side of the Trunk Road, was one sheet of water. The fact being that from all the innumerable cracks water had gone on spouting, and that, coincidentally with the overflow of this *bheel*, the water level had risen to the same height all over the surrounding country.

In addition to the cracks from which the water welled up carrying the sand with it, innumerable jets of water, like fountains playing, spouted up to heights varying from 18 inches to quite $3\frac{1}{2}$ or 4 feet. Wherever this had occurred, the land was afterwards seen to occupy a sandy circle with a depression in its centre. These circles ranged from 2 to 6 and 8 feet in diameter, and were to be seen all over the country. In some places, several were quite close together; in others they were at a distance of several yards apart. They had the appearance of small craters. I have heard it said that the water from the cracks and these so-called fountains was warm, almost hot, but this must be due to someone's imagination: I had to wade through a good deal of water whilst the water level was rising, and had the temperature of the water been abnormal, it must have made itself felt to me. It must not be overlooked that the country had been water-logged days before the earthquake came, and that it must have been this water which was driven up with the subsidence of the land, as I believe the quake was due to a subsidence.

In front of Jemadarhat rest-house the Garo Hills, are within 5 miles, and behind it is the Brahmaputra at a distance of not more than 2 miles. The Trunk Road remained above water, but in certain portions where it had subsided from 1 to 2 feet the water flowed across it, and at these places, where the panic-stricken villagers tried to run towards the direction of Lakhipur, which is 12 miles off in the Gauhati direction, the poor creatures got more alarmed than ever, for they found themselves sprawling about in the water, unable to realise what had barred their progress, and not knowing if they were going to get out of it again. At all these gaps or places, where the earth had subsided, or where fissures and cracks had formed, the rush of water from

them all carried with it an immense quantity of sand, and this was what barred the progress of these panic-stricken villagers. This sand had a particularly quicksandish feel about it, but fortunately, as a rule, was not deep on the portions of the road that had subsided near the rest-house.

The main shock seemed to me to have lasted nearly six minutes, but perhaps in this I am wrong, and perhaps I may have missed a cessation and taken two or more shocks as one, for certainly I noticed no cessation. It seemed as though death from drowning must have been the end of every one near me. Although the shocks went on being repeated incessantly at intervals of a few minutes, the rise in the water ceased after half an hour, and then the idea present to one's eye was that the country on either side of the road was nothing more than innumerable sand-churs of different sizes, such as are met with in the Brahmaputra. This meant, of course, that crops were considerably covered by this sand. Most of the excavations made by the earth-cutters annually on each side of the Trunk Road to enable them to throw fresh earth on to it have been filled in by this sand, and the Public Works Department will not have quite such heavy rates to pay for earth-cutting, as the leads will be comparatively short when they begin work again ; but for this, which is really no advantage to speak of, the loss to the province must be enormous.

All the panic subsided by about 9 o'clock ; the hut I was originally in was now under water, and I could not get back to it. Many of the villagers' houses and those of the Kayas had sunk a good deal, whilst others filled with two or more feet of sand through the door ways. My horse broke away towards the end of the first shocks, and made for home, the syce after her as hard as he could go, but on reaching a good strong wooden bridge, she was stopped by the bridge subsiding on the Dhubri side. Cattle seemed to find great trouble in extricating themselves from the sand and water, which but a few minutes before was their grazing ground. Villages were wholly vacated and refuge taken wherever high land was available. Almost everything is said to have its ludicrous side, and in the midst of confusion and the marked panic of the villagers, it was amusing to find my cook busy at work preparing dinner within half an hour of the occurrence. There he was, as though nothing had occurred, on the plinth of a burnt down hut only just above water and surrounded on all sides by it. I was very grateful to him later on for not having parted with his wits.

As the rush of water ceased and order was to some small extent renewed, those who were able to do so scrambled to their

huts, and brought out boxes and bedding, etc., etc., and, with their belongings, encamped on the road for the night. At about 10 it struck me I might have a roof over my head if I got near the ferryghât, as there was a tumble-down serai there. I had gone half a mile when two men assured me it was impossible for me to progress, owing to a gap of several feet in the road through which water flowed, and across which they had just swum. On hearing this, I returned, and with my bed on the road, attempted to get some rest. This was impossible, with the continuous and oft-repeated seismic shocks at short intervals, which, whenever the least bit strong, were followed by a wail of human voices. Cattle, goats, and dogs formed a goodly addition to those resting on the road for the night. At 2 a. m. a sharp drizzle came down, and with my umbrella over my face and a rug over my body, I weathered it out till 3 a. m., when my rug had got wet through. Close by was the rest-house well. I now transferred my headquarters to it by wading across 2 feet of water for about 15 yards, and then spread a dryish rug on the masonry platform of this well. The well and its platform had both been badly cracked at 5 p. m., and the water had risen to within 18 inches of the surface. It had a thatched covering over it, and this sheltered me during two hours of heavy rain.

At 5 a. m. I rose finally, having had a fair night's rest under most extraordinary circumstances. Having had *chota hazree* at 6, I started to walk back to the ghât, having learnt that the road was impassable towards Lakhipur. As the road was heavy and my *syce* had developed strong fever, I left him the trap to drive in slowly. The whole Trunk Road from Jemadarhat to the ferryghât, which I had seen, had cracks running along it, which were in some instances over 100 feet long; in others the earth had subsided for a similar distance, and then, again, traverse cracks, depressions, etc., existed all along the road, at distances of a few feet for miles; the same thing seemed to have occurred off the road side. The villagers stated that they had lost the grain they had stored in their houses. On arrival at the ghât, it is scarcely necessary to say it was much changed, the river having risen considerably since 4 p. m. However, after getting almost knee-deep in many places in very disagreeable soft sand, about which I was hopping for quite half an hour, I got safe on to the ferry, and returned to Dhubri at 9 a. m. Shortly before reaching the ferryghât, my *syce* had sent word that my horse was drowned, and desired me to return. At the ghât another messenger brought me word saying the animal was well stuck in soft sand. So I sent back coolies, and, much to my surprise, found her none the

worse, and at Dhubri by 5 p.m. It seems she had got into the sand at about 7 a.m., and remained in it till 1 p.m. There were several gaps in the road between Jemadarhat and the ferry-ghât, but none over 2 feet wide, and the *syce*, instead of exercising a little care when having to go off the road, took the shortest cut possible, with the result noted by me. The huge gap I was told of the night before turned out to be a myth.

On returning to Dhubri, everything was as I had pictured it at 5 p.m. the previous night. The town is in ruins. It has sunk everywhere, and for hundreds of feet in a stretch it is cracked and fissured. The dispensary (main building) stands, but has suffered much. It is built on iron pillars, and its brick walls are only about 12 feet high and 2 feet thick; above, its walls are lath and plaster. Hence the reason it has stood. The cutcherry, the forest house, Local Board bungalow, circuit house, the club, telegraph office and telegraph signallers' quarters, and the Gauripur zamindars' house stand, also Leslie's and Maher's, because they are built on piles. Of course, the plaster and lath are all gone. The treasury, Jewett's house, Jolly's house, the dâk bungalow, the Bijni Hall, two large houses at the immigration depôts, the liquor shop in the bazar, and the Muhammadan *musjid* and my house still stand, but are dangerous to enter and must all be dismantled. The post office, Hallifax's, Bogribari zamindar's house, the high school, the church, the Sikh temple, the new jail, the newly-built magazine, the seven newly-built houses in the dispensary ground, and all the out-houses of every single brick-built house are down flat. So far, only one fatal case has been reported, and this a native child about 5 years of age. The natives are all panic-stricken, are living on the roads, in boats, and in steamer flats, and seem most helpless; the better classes encamp out on the roads during the night, although several of their houses are safe. Several of them have, however, suffered considerably; houses, especially those built on new reclaimed land near the Dhubri back water, have subsided a good deal towards the back.

Wild animals used at one time to be numerous, but they are rapidly decreasing in numbers. They include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*) buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig and five kinds of deer, *viz.*, the barasingha or swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*) the rib-faced or barking

Fauna.

deer (*cervulus muntjac*), the sambar (*cervus unicolor*) and the spotted deer (*cervus axis*.)

The rhinoceros is extinct on the south bank and very nearly so on the north. Buffalo are reduced to a few small and scattered herds. The spotted deer are rare and the swamp deer becoming so. On the other hand bison are slowly increasing (owing to the spread of Hinduism), while tigers are common and leopards are plentiful.

Elephants are fairly common on both banks of the Brahmaputra, especially near the hills, and when the crops are ripening the solitary males occasionally do considerable damage. For the purpose of elephant catching the temporarily settled portions of the district are divided into two *mahals* or tracts. The right to hunt in each mahal is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. Three men are usually mounted on each elephant, their only hold being a couple of ropes passing round the animals neck and under its tail. One of the men guides the elephant, the other wields the noose, while the third uses a spiked mallet as a spur. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the

boughs of an over hanging tree. After a time, the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and, as they close in on either side of the captured animal, it is unable to escape or to do much injury to its captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. Fifty animals were caught in 1903-04, the last year in which the *mahals* were sold by the Deputy Commissioner.

Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1903, are said to have accounted for over 1,300 head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows:—elephant 2, tigers 5, leopard 1, bears 2, wild buffaloes 2, snakes 32, total 44. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 57 tigers, 133 leopards, and 7 bears. Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, jungle fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*) pheasants, and hares. Peafowl are also occasionally seen in the north of the district.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Summary—Legendary History—The Koch Kings—Their decline—Invasion of Goalpara by Ahoms—Conquest by the Muhammadans—Relations between British and Ahoms—The Eastern Duars—The Garo frontier—Changes in Jurisdiction—Archæology.

Summary. The Goalpara district has never been a separate political entity under its own king, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various states of which, from time to time, it formed a part. It was originally included in the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamarupa, which is mentioned in the Mahabharata, and which at one time occupied North Eastern Bengal and a great part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. The history of this kingdom, dating, as it presumably does, from about the twelfth century B. C., is largely a matter of doubtful and fragmentary tradition. About the twelfth century A. D., Goalpara is said to have been conquered, first by the Sen, and then by the Pal kings of Bengal, but there are practically no records of the period of their occupation. According to the traditions of the Mahapurushias, it subsequently formed part of a kingdom called Kamata, whose ruler at the beginning of the fourteenth century was named Durlabh Narayan. In the fifteenth century the district was included in the

dominions of the Khyen princes, whose capital Kamatapur, the modern Lal Bazar in the Kuch Bihar State, was sacked by the Muhammadans in 1498 A. D. A few years afterwards it passed into the hands of the Koch kings who also established their capital in Kuch Bihar. About 1580 A. D., the Koch kingdom was divided, and the country east of the Sankosh, which included Goalpara, Kamrup, and Darrang was surrendered to Raghu Rai, the nephew of Nar Narayan; while the territory that lay west of that river was reserved for the son of that prince. Disputes, however, soon broke out between the two families, and Goalpara was conquered by the Muhammadans, who had been called in by Nar Narayan's son to his assistance. The aid of the Ahoms was invoked on the other side, and for some years the war between these two powers dragged on with varying results. In 1637, peace was concluded, and the Barnadi, which now divides Kamrup from Darrang, was fixed as the boundary between Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms advanced again, occupied Goalpara, and held it for three years, but were compelled to retreat before Mir Jumla's army. From that time onwards the district formed part of the Muhammadan dominions, till, with the rest of Bengal, it was ceded to the British in 1765 A. D.

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river, on the western boundaries of Rangpur, to the Dikrai, in the east of the Darrang district.* It was divided into four portions,

The
kingdom of
Kamarupa.
1200 B.C.
1000 A. D.

* The principal authority for the history of Kamarupa, and the Khyen and Koch Kings is an interesting paper on the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., published in J. A. S. B., Vol LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

i. e., Kamapith, from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, which included therefore the present district of Goalpara; Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli; and Saumarpith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa, of whom anything in particular is recorded, is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak. He established his capital at Pragjyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though some what headstrong, prince.

He was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas, at the great battle of Kurukshetra; and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Goalpara formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

Practically nothing is known of the history of the district for the next 2,000 years. The dynasty of Narak was displaced by foreign invaders, and after many generations was restored again. A line of powerful and civilized Pala Kings flourished in Central Assam about the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D., but whether Goalpara was included in their territories or not it would be difficult to say. At the begining of the fifteenth century we reach more certain ground.

The Khyen
Kings 15th
century A. D.

A Khyen of humble origin, who is said to have been the cowherd of a Brahman, succeeded in deposing the local king and founded a capital at Kamatapur in the

south of the Kuch Bihar State, near the modern village of Lal Bazar. The ruins of this city still exist and, when visited by Buchanan Hamilton in 1809 A. D., were said to be nineteen miles in circumference.

This Khyen assumed the name of Niladwaj, and was succeeded by his son Chakradwaj, who in his turn handed on the sceptre to his son Nilambar. Nilambar was a powerful prince and is said to have reigned over Rangpur, Goalpara, and part of Kamrup, but in 1498 A. D., his capital was taken by the Muhammadans under Husain Shah. The Muhammadans are said to have been invited into the country by Nilambar's minister, who disclosed to them its intrinsic weakness. This man had been embittered by the savage conduct of his royal master. The Raja suspected the minister's son of tampering with one of the queens, and had the young man killed, and his flesh served up to his father at a banquet. After the poor wretch had eaten freely of the dish, its horrid nature was disclosed to him. The minister then left the capital, ostensibly to do penance for the dreadful act he had unwittingly committed, but in reality to seek the means of vengeance.

The siege of Kamatapur is said to have lasted several years, and the town was finally taken by stratagem. The Muhammadan general announced that he was about to retire, but asked that, before he did so, his wife might be allowed to visit Nilambar's queen. The request was granted, and a number of closely veiled litters were introduced within the city walls. But it was soldiers and not women that the litter curtains hid, and

the gates were quickly thrown open to the advancing Moslems. Nilambar was placed in an iron cage to be taken to Gaur, but on the way he succeeded in making his escape; and Buchanan Hamilton reports that even in his time the common people of Kamarupa still looked for his restoration at some future date.

After the fall of Kamatapur the Muhammadans endeavoured to extend their conquests up the valley of the Brahmaputra, but they were repulsed by the Ahoms, and Nilambar's former kingdom was split up into a number of petty principalities.

The
Koch Kings.
Viswa Singh
1509-1534
A. D.

In the midst of this confusion and anarchy a new family rose to power. The founder of the line was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who, according to tradition, was the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces. Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar, and reduced his state to order. The whole population was divided up into different corps under officers of increasing dignity; a thakuria being appointed over every 20 coolies, a saikia over every 100, a hazari over 1,000, an umra over 3,000 and a nawab over 66,000. He took a census of his subjects and found that the number capable of bearing arms was 5,225,000, an obvious exaggeration. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat; but the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made tributary,

seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition.

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A. D., by his son Malla Deva, who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but mindful of his father's failure, commenced operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it. The work was entrusted to his brother Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon, (the modern Nazira) and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Rajas of Cachar and Manipur were then reduced to the state of feudatary chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan declined, however, to accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king.

Nar Narayan
1534-1584
A.D.

**Decline of
Koch king-
dom Raghu
Rai 1581-1593.**

Within the space of two generations, the Koch kingdom had attained to an extraordinary height of power and prosperity, but its decline was as rapid as its rise. For a long time Nar Narayan had no male offspring, and Silarai's son, Raghu Rai, was regarded as his heir. When this boy was approaching manhood, one of his uncle's wives gave birth to a son called Lakshmi Narayan; and Raghu Rai, realising that he had now no hope of succeeding to the throne, withdrew from the capital to Barnagar in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup. Nar Narayan endeavoured to compel him to return, but his soldiers were defeated and the king weakly resolved to divide his kingdom.* The territory east of the Sankosh was made over to Raghu Rai, while Lakshmi Narayan received the part that lay west of that river. Raghu Rai continued to reside at Barnagar, and seems to have been much devoted to religious exercises.

**Parikshit
1593-1614.**

He was succeeded by his son Parikshit in 1593 A. D., who built a town at North Gauhati, and mounted cannon at Pandunath. War then broke out between Parikshit and his cousin Lakshmi Narayan.† The latter was defeated but called in the Muhammadans to his aid, and on their arrival the situation was reversed.

* According to Buchanan Hamilton, the kingdom was founded by Hajo, father of Hira, and grandfather of Viswa Singh, and divided by Viswa Singh who allotted the portion east of the Sankosh to Sukladwaj or Silarai, and that west of the river to Nar Narayan. On general grounds, however, this account seems to be less probable than that given in the body of the text.

† According to one authority, the quarrel dated from the time of Raghu Rai who declined to pay tribute after Nar Narayan's death.

Mukarram Khan advanced with 6,000 horse, 12,000 foot, and 500 ships, and took Parikshit's fort at Dhubri. The Koch king then essayed a naval engagement on the Gadadhar river, but was defeated and retreated to Barnagar near Barpeta where he surrendered in 1614 A. D., and was sent to the Court of the Mughal Emperor.*

His brother Bali Narayan, or Baldeo as he is called by the Muhammadan historians, fled to the Ahoms, and the struggle between these two powers continued for some years with varying success. The Musalmans penetrated as far as Bishnath, but their career of conquest was then checked by a crushing defeat. They retained, however, their hold upon Goalpara, and, in the hostilities that subsequently took place, much of the fighting seems to have been in the neighbourhood of Gauhati, near Pandughat. Parikshit's son, Chandra Narayan, who had established himself with a strong force at Karaibari was defeated and killed; and Bali Narayan, who had erected a fort at Jogighopa on the eastern frontier of the Goalpara district, was driven across the Manas. The following year he was completely routed and he shortly afterwards died at Singri in Darrang (1637 A. D.) The Muhammadans took the forts at Pandu and Srighat, and the Barnadi, which divides the modern districts of Kamrup and Darrang, was made the boundary between Muhammadan and Ahom territory.

**Bali
Narayan.
1614-1637.**

* An account of this struggle will be found in a paper by Professor Blochmann in J. A. S. B., Vol. XLI, Part I, No. 1, 1872, page 49.

**Ahoms seize
Goalpara in
1658. A. D.**

Twenty years later, Pran Narayan, who was at that time ruler of that part of the Koch kingdom which lay west of the Sankosh, took advantage of the confusion that occurred on the deposition of Shah Jahan to attack the Muhammadan governor of Goalpara. This officer retreated to Gauhati, but was expelled by the Ahoms, who then advanced down the valley of the Brahmaputra, seized Goalpara, and drove Pran Narayan with his army beyond the Sankosh.

**Reconquered
by Muham-
madans in
1661.**

For three years Goalpara remained in the hands of the Ahoms, but in 1661 A. D. Mir Jumla started on the invasion of Assam. He defeated Pran Narayan, and marched up the south bank of the Brahmaputra till he occupied Gargaon (Nazira). The rains then set in with unusual severity, supplies were very scarce, and the camp of the invaders was ravaged by disease. Early in the cold weather, a treaty was patched up and Mir Jumla retreated to Bengal, though he died on the river before reaching Dacca. Two years later the Ahoms were again in possession of Kamrup, but the advanced guard of the Mughals remained at Rangamati on the banks of the Manas; and Goalpara continued under Muhammadan rule till 1765, when, with the rest of Bengal, it passed into the possession of the East India Company.

**Relations
between
British and
Ahoms.**

Prior to 1825, the year in which the Burmese were expelled from the Brahmaputra valley, Goalpara town and Jogighopa, a village lying opposite to it on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were the frontier outposts from which trade was carried on with the Assamese. Colonies of Europeans settled here, who forcibly seized a

monopoly of the export trade of Bengal. A similar monopoly of the Assam trade was enjoyed by two Brahmans, who held a farm of the Ahom custom house, and business was carried on between these two communities to their mutual profit. The principal articles of export from Assam were lac, silk, cotton, and mustard seed, the chief import salt. After Captain Welsh's expedition in 1792, these monopolies were abolished, but the times were not ripe for free trade. According to Buchanan Hamilton, the immediate result was a great decrease in the volume of business done, as little reliance could be placed on the good faith of the individual merchants. The remains of this European colony are still to be seen in the shape of four nameless tombs at Jogighopa, which is now but a tiny village. It was from Goalpara, too, that the first attempt was made by a British subject to intervene in the affairs of Assam. In 1788, a salt farmer of that place, named Raush, sent a body of barkandazes to assist the Ahom Raja, who had been driven from his throne by the rebel Moamaras. The barkandazes were, however, cut up to a man, and the Raja was compelled to apply to the Governor-General for aid. The expedition of Captain Welsh in 1792 and the subsequent conquest of Assam in 1825, form, however, no part of the history of Goalpara.

The history of the Eastern Duars, a strip of country lying at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, differs in some respects from that of the remainder of the district. According to the Vamsavali, a chronicle in the possession of the Darrang branch of the Koch family, which

**The Eastern
Duars.**

was compiled about 1806 A. D., Nara Singha, son of Viswa Singh, and brother of Nar Narayan, became ruler of Bhutan.* In this there is nothing intrinsically improbable. Mr. Ashley Eden, in his Report on his mission to Bhutan, states that the Bhutias have apparently not been in possession of Bhutan for more than two centuries; and that it formerly belonged to a tribe called by the Bhutias Tephu, who are generally believed to have been natives of Kuch Bihar. These Tephus were subsequently driven down into the plains by some Tibetan soldiers, who had been sent from Lhasa to enquire into the resource of the country.† On the break up of the Koch power at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and during the struggles that ensued between the Muhammadans and Ahoms, the Bhutias succeeded in bringing the territory now known as the Eastern Duars under their control. Their system of administration seems to have been harsh and arbitrary. Mr. Mills, in his report on the Goalpara district in 1853, states that raiyats were constantly moving from the Eastern Duars into British territory to escape the exactions and oppressions of the Bhutia Zamindars.‡ The hill-men did not, however, confine their attentions to their own people, and repeated outrages and aggressions were committed on the property and persons of our subjects. Notwithstanding numerous remonstrances and threats, scarcely a year passed without the occurrence

* Vide the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., page 24.

† Political mission to Bhutan, p. 108.

‡ Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Calcutta, 1854 Goalpara, p. 2.

of several raids into British territory, in which the villagers were plundered and killed, or carried off as slaves. In the cold weather of 1863, Mr. Ashley Eden was sent on a mission to Bhutan to remonstrate with the Government of that state. But instead of meeting with apologies and promises of amendment, the envoy was subjected to the grossest insults. On his return to British territory, the Bhutan Rajas were informed that, unless the fullest reparation was afforded, Government would be compelled to make good their demands by force. This solemn warning was completely disregarded, and in 1864, Government formally annexed the Bhutan Duars and occupied them with a military force. The Bhutias offered but a feeble resistance, and a treaty of peace was concluded in November 1865 under which Government undertook to make a yearly payment of Rs. 25,000 rising to Rs. 50,000 as a species of quit rent for the Duars, on condition that the hill men continued to be of good behaviour.

It was not, however, only on the northern frontier that the tribes inhabiting the hills molested the inhabitants of the plains. The mountains to the south were occupied by the Garos, a section of the great Bodo race, who were probably driven southwards from the plains by the kings of Kuch Bihar.

**The Garo
frontier.**

The earliest notices of the Garos describe them as being in a state of intermittent conflict with the zamindars of the large estates lying at the foot of the hills. The exactions levied by the subordinates of these persons irritated the hill-men, and the belief that

the spirits of their headmen required the souls of others to attend them in the next world, acted as a further incitement to the despatch of raiding parties. At the end of the eighteenth century, the Garos inhabiting the outer ranges had been brought to some extent under the authority of the zamindars, but the villages in the interior were entirely independent. Steps were then taken by Government to release the tributary Garos from the control of the Bengali landlords, and it was hoped that by this means the practice of raiding would be stopped. It was difficult, however, to put down all oppression, and the hill men continued to be turbulent. In 1848, an expedition was sent into the hills to punish the Dasanni Garos for having murdered one of their headmen, with all his family, because he attempted to collect the tribute due by them to government. In 1852, seven Garo raids took place in which 44 persons were killed. A blockade was established along the frontier, which produced some effect, but, in 1856, the tribes broke out again and a succession of forays was made upon the plains. Between May 1857 and October 1859, nine raids were made into Goalpara, and 20 heads taken. An expedition was despatched into the hills in 1861, the effects of which lasted for a few years; but, in 1866, a most murderous raid was committed on the Mymensingh district, and it was decided to establish a British officer in the hills. The success with which this experiment was attended was very striking. Raids at once ceased, and since that date the southern frontier of the district has been undisturbed. A full account of the Garo troubles will

be found in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Mackenzie, pages (245-261.)

Goalpara has experienced several changes of jurisdiction since first it came under British rule. ^{Changes in jurisdiction.} The permanently settled portion was originally part of the district of Rangpur. In 1822, it was formed into a separate district known as North-East Rangpur, which, together with the Garo Hills frontier, was placed in charge of Mr. David Scott, one of the first and the greatest of our administrators on the north-east frontier. After the cession of Assam in 1826, Goalpara was annexed to the Assam Valley division, but in 1867 was transferred to the newly created Kuch Bihar Commissionership. In the following year it was placed for judicial purposes under the Judicial Commissioner of Assam; and it was finally incorporated in the new Province, when Assam was erected into a separate administration in 1874. The headquarters of the district were originally fixed at Goalpara, but were transferred to Dhubri in 1879. It was at that time thought that the railway would soon be extended to the town, an event which did not take place till more than twenty years later, and it was considered to be the most convenient centre for the supervision of the overland route of immigration to the Province. Other arguments put forward were the facilities afforded for forest and land revenue administration, and the fact that Dhubri was a growing place and Goalpara a decaying one. Most of these arguments have been hardly justified by subsequent events.

Owing to the erosive action of the river, the growth of Dhubri has received a serious check, and it is still a much smaller town than Goalpara.

Archæology. In the previous pages, it has been shown that Goalpara, though forming a portion of several powerful kingdoms, has generally been an outlying or frontier district, and has never contained the capital of the king to whom it owned allegiance. The result is that there are hardly any archæological remains of interest within its boundaries. At Rangamati, about six miles north-east of Gauripur town, there is a mosque which is said to have been built in 1687 A.D. Other remains which are situated on the hill are a masonry enclosure, in which a tiger is said to have been confined, and an *idgarh*, or place of prayer, with a deep well. The hill is now covered with thick jungle, but in the time of the Mughals it was the headquarters of the Imperial *faujdar*. Near Krishnai, there was a temple to Tukreswari which enjoyed some local repute. It was wrecked by the earthquake of 1897, and is now (1905) under reconstruction. Near North Salmara, there are the remains of extensive earthworks, about one mile in circumference, which are known as Ram Raja's garh. At Jogighopa, there are small caves in the rocky cliffs overhanging the Brahmaputra, which are said to have been sanctified by the various ascetics who from time to time have lived there. The hillock at Dhubri is said to have been artificially constructed in 1665 A. D., by the Mughal army, under the orders of Guru Tez Bahadur, the famous Sikh.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Area and Density—Towns and Villages—Growth of Population—Migration—Sex and Marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and Tribe—Religion—Hindu Sects—Temples and Dhams—Animism—Muhammadanism—Christianity—Other religions—Occupations.

The total area of the district is 3,954 square miles, the population in 1901 was 462,052, and the density was thus 117 to the square mile. Area and density.

The district contains two small towns, Dhubri and Goalpara, and 1,461 villages. Towns and villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betel nut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. Except in the Eastern Duars,

it is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance. Taking them, however, for what they are worth, it appears that villages as a rule run small, and in 1901 nearly half the total population were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

**Growth of
population.**

The earliest estimate of the population on record is one submitted in 1853 to Mr. Moffatt Mills by the Deputy Collector in charge of the *thakbast* survey. The Eastern Duars at that time formed part of Bhutan, and the population of the remainder of the district was said to be 141,638 souls. The first regular census was taken in 1872, and the figures in the margin show that the earlier estimate was probably too low. It is true that the Eastern Duars had been added in 1864, but the population of this tract in 1901 was only 72,072. The census of 1872 was admittedly incomplete, and the growth of the population can only be measured with any degree of accuracy from 1881. The total increase during the next twenty years only amounted to 3 per cent.

1872	387,841
1881	448,700
1891	452,773
1901	462,062

The best test of natural growth is, however, to be found in the tables of birth place. From these it appears that the number of persons born in Goalpara and censused in the Province in 1901, was some 12,000 more than the number so returned in 1891, but a few hundreds less than the figure for 1881. This complete

absence of natural growth is largely due to the ravages of *kala azar*, to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter, but even apart from the effects of this dread disease, there seems to be something in the district unfavourable to a rapid expansion of the population. This was the view taken by Mr. Moffatt Mills in 1853. "Mr. Bedford, however, informs me, that notwithstanding this influx of settlers, he does not think the population is on the increase, in consequence of the great mortality annually caused by cholera and small pox. He says, mangoe topes, sooparie trees, and hamlets are to be seen deserted in some parts, the inhabitants having been carried off by these scourges, while in other parts land is being reclaimed and new villages are springing up."* It is impossible at present to draw any definite conclusions as since 1881, the first year for which reliable figures are available, a special cause of high mortality, in the shape of *kala azar*, has been in operation in Lower and Central Assam. It is, however, significant that the population of Kuch Bihar, which adjoins Goalpara on the west, decreased by nearly 4 per cent. between 1881 and 1891, and by 2 per cent. in the next decade. In Rangpur too, another neighbouring district, there was no growth of population between 1872 and 1901, and, though of recent years the public health has been improving, the natural growth during the last decade was only about 1 per cent. The Terai at the foot of the Bhutan and Garo Hills is un-

* Report on the Province of Assam, by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta 1854. Goalpara, p. 2.

doubtedly unhealthy. Infant marriage too, which is extremely prevalent in Goalpara, is certainly not a factor which conduces to a rapid growth of population.

**Variation by
subdivisions**

From Table IV in the Appendix it will be seen that while the population of the Dhubri subdivision increased by 47,000 during the last twenty years of the century, the population of Goalpara declined by 31,000. It would not, however, be safe to infer that Goalpara alone is unhealthy, while Dhubri is flourishing and progressive. *Kala azar* is said to have been most virulent at the foot of the Garo Hills, and that may have had something to do with the decrease in the Goalpara subdivision. Migration is, however, another important factor, and most of the emigration from the district is believed to go from the southern while most of the immigration is to the northern subdivision. There is probably also migration from Goalpara to Dhubri to which the census figures give no clue.

Migration.

The tea industry, which is the principal cause of immigration to other districts of Assam, is of no importance in Goalpara; but, situated as it is on the confines of the Province, it receives a considerable number of foreigners, and 9 per cent. of the population censused there in 1901 had been born outside Assam. The immigrants from Bengal numbered 33,803 or about six sevenths of the total. Nearly half of these Bengalis came from the neighbouring district of Rangpur, and almost all these natives of Rangpur were censused in the Dhubri subdivision. The number of emigrants to Bengal is, on the other hand, comparatively small. In

1901, only 5,412 persons born in Assam, the great bulk of whom came no doubt from Goalpara, were censused in Rangpur, Jalpaiguri, and Kuch Bihar. The other Provinces and States from which there were a considerable number of immigrants were the United Provinces, Rajputana, and Nepal.

In 1901, there was a net loss to Goalpara of 7,293 persons from inter-district migration within the Province. A considerable number of people cross the border into the plains portion of the Garo Hills. Against this must be set the northward movement from the hills, but the net loss to Goalpara was nearly 6,000 souls. On the other hand, in its transactions with Kamrup, the district gained about 2,500 persons, the earthquake having seriously interfered with cultivation in the neighbourhood of Barpeta. In 1901, there were less than 4,500 natives of Goalpara who had emigrated to districts in the Province other than these two. Nearly 1,500 of these persons were censused on the tea gardens.

The proportion of women to men is lower in Goalpara than in any other district of the Province, with the exception of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The proportion has moreover a steady tendency to decrease.* Sex and marriage. The deficiency of women is partly due to immigration, men amongst the immigrant population largely exceeding the women in numbers. It is also partly due to a deficiency of women amongst the natives of the district. This deficiency is almost entirely due to the Hindus and Muhammadans, as amongst the animistic tribes, who

* Number of women to 1,000 men :—1881, 947 ; 1891, 911 ; 1901, 903.

form more than one-fourth of the total population, the women slightly exceed the men in numbers. It is a significant fact that in Goalpara the followers of both of these religions marry their girls at a much earlier age than is usually the custom in Assam. There can be little doubt that this custom is prejudicial to female life, and in the Report on the Census of India for 1901 it is shewn that the proportion of girls at the age of 10-15 varies inversely with the number who are married at this period.* How marked is the difference between the customs of Goalpara and Assam Proper † with regard to the age of marriage, will be seen from the following abstract, which shows the percentage of Hindu girls at certain ages; who have performed the marriage ceremony, out of the total number living at that age.

Age.	Percentage of girls married and widowed.				
	Goalpara.		Assam Proper		
0-10	...	4·8	...	...	0·8
10-15	...	62·4	...	...	15·1
			Unmarried.		
15-20	...	7·2	...	...	38·7

In Assam Proper, it is quite the exception for marriage to take place before the age of puberty, but in this respect Goalpara unfortunately conforms to the customs of Bengal. The figures quoted refer only to Hindus, but the Muhammadans of the district are, if anything, still more addicted to the practice. Even the animistic tribes marry earlier than is usual in Assam.

* P 118.

† Assam Proper consists of the five upper districts of the Assam Valley, *i.e.*, Kamrup, Darrang, Nowgong, Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

The usual form of marriage amongst Hindus is the full *hompura* rite, which is described on page 63 of the Report on the Assam Census of 1901. The practice of taking a bride price is almost universal, even Brahmans receiving money for their daughters. The price asked for the girl depends to a great extent on the resources of the purchaser, and varies from Rs. 20 to Rs. 1,000. The average price is probably about Rs. 100. A man who is too poor to pay cash for a girl works for some time in the houses of his father-in-law as a *ghorojia*. Amongst the animistic tribes the essential portion of the ceremony is a feast of pork and rice washed down with great quantities of rice beer. The cost of such a wedding breakfast is about Rs. 50.

The abstract in the margin shows out of 10,000 males **Infirmities.**

	Goalpara	Assam	Indian Empire.	the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for
Insanity ...	8	5	3	
Deaf mutism ...	11	9	6	
Blindness ...	13	10	12	
Leprosy ...	21	13	5	

record at the Census of 1901.

The district enjoys an extraordinary pre-eminence with regard to three out of four of these infirmities. The proportion of insane, blind, and leprous persons of both sexes in Goalpara, at each of the last three enumerations, was not exceeded by any other district in the plains of the Province, with the solitary exception of blind men in 1891, and even they stood a good second on the list. The proportion of deaf-mutes never fell below the average for the plains; but this, in view of the other

extraordinary record, might almost be considered a matter for congratulation. It has been suggested that the prevalence of insanity may be due to a special predisposition of the Koch race to that form of disease. This theory derives some confirmation from the fact that the proportion of insane persons is exceptionally high in Kuch Bihar and the neighbouring district of Rangpur. With regard to leprosy, Goalpara enjoys a position not only of Provincial but even of Imperial eminence. In 1901, there were only three districts in the whole of the Indian Empire, with a larger proportion of male lepers. The causes which tend to increase or diminish the prevalence of this disease are still unknown.

Language.

Bengali is the common language of the district, and was returned by 69 per cent. of the population in 1901. Assamese was spoken by less than three per cent. In both cases the form of dialect in use is far from pure. The tribesmen are, however, unusually faithful to their own peculiar forms of speech, and nearly a fourth of the total population use Kachari, Rabha, or Garo, all of which are closely akin. Many of the villagers in the Eastern Duars can understand no language other than their own. In the other districts of the Assam Valley the Tibeto-Burman tribes are generally bilingual, and know enough of Assamese to enable them to carry on a conversation with their Hindu neighbours. This is not the case in Goalpara, and in the Eastern Duars intercourse with the villagers is much restricted for any one who does not happen to have studied Mech.

Homogeneity is the dominant note in the social system of Goalpara, and a single caste, the Rajbansi, form over one fourth of the total population. The ranks of the Rajbansi are recruited from the aboriginal tribes such as the Mech, Rabha, and Kachari, and if they with the Koch, who are also akin, are added, this single group amounts to more than half the total population of the district. More than one fourth of the total population are Muhammadans, and less than a quarter of the whole is thus left for all castes and tribes outside the Rajbansi group. The higher castes, such as the Brahman and Kayastha, are by no means strongly represented. Even the Kalitas, who stand for middle class respectability in Assam and form so large a proportion of the population of Kamrup, are comparatively few in numbers. The same may be said of the Kewats or Kaibarttas, who rank next after the Kalitas in the estimation of the Assamese. Goalpara never, however, formed part of the Ahom kingdom, and, though it is one of the districts of the Assam Valley, it belongs more to Northern Bengal than to Assam Proper. Brief notes are given in the following pages on the indigenous castes and tribes who had more than 5,000 members in the district in 1901.*

The Brahmans perform the offices usually allotted to them in Bengal, and act as priests, and officers, ministerial or otherwise, of Government and the great land-

Males	...	...	2,308.
Females	...	...	898

*An alphabetical glossary of all castes censused in Assam will be found in Chap. XI of the Census Report for 1901.

lords. Most of these men are foreigners, a fact which is clearly brought out by the disproportion between the sexes, there being nearly three males to every female. The Brahmans of Goalpara fall into four classes, Vaidik, Rarhi, Barendra, and Kamrupi. The Vaidik Brahmans are descended from men of that caste who migrated from Upper India to Bengal about the eleventh century A. D., but the Rarhi and Barendra septs have moved into the district in more recent times. Many of the Kamrupi Brahmans are priests who minister to castes comparatively low in the social scale. They also infringe the traditions of their caste by taking money for their daughters, a practice condemned by the orthodox.

Garos.

The Garos are a tribe of Bodo origin, the bulk of whom are to be found in the hills that bear their name.

Males	...	5,438
Females	...	5,401

According to their own traditions they came originally from Tibet and settled in Kuch Bihar. From there they were driven to Jogighopa, and thence to Gauhati, where they were enslaved by the Assamese. They were, however, delivered by a Khasi prince, and then travelled *vid* Boko to the Garo Hills. Most of the Garos are to be found in the hilly country on the outskirts of the Garo Hills. They live in better style than many of the hill tribes and are to some extent differentiated from other members of the Bodo family by the good position accorded to their women and the extraordinary scantiness of the national costume. A full account of the manners and customs of the Garos will be found in a Monograph on the Garo tribe which is now under preparation.

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale. Like other humble castes they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation, of Siva. The Jugis in Goalpara support their pretensions by laying claim to ceremonial purity. They are taking to infant marriage, and some even go so far as to assume the sacred thread. Very few Jugis now earn their living as weavers, and the caste as a whole has taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

In Goalpara, they form a comparatively advanced section of the community and declare that the period of depression through which the caste has passed was entirely due to the malevolence of Ballal Sen.

The Kacharis or Bara (mispronounced Bodo), as they call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found, not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tippera, south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper water of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it and is to some extent confirmed

Males	...	...	6,904
Females	...	...	6,900

Males	...	...	7,342
Females	...	...	7,325

by a prayer which is in use amongst the Dimasa* in the North Cachar Hills. This prayer refers to a huge peepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill on which the temple of Kamakhya stands, in Kamrup. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. The inscriptions recorded on copper plates in the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D., refer to the conquest of Kamarupa by a foreign dynasty which was subsequently replaced by a king of the line of Narak†. It is possible that the Kacharis were the invading force, and on their expulsion from Gauhati they might not unnaturally have retreated towards the Dhansiri valley.

No connection between Kacharis of Goalpara and Dimapur.

The Kachari kingdom was one of the strongest powers with which the Ahoms were confronted when they entered the valley of the Brahmaputra. Their capital was located at Dimapur on the Dhansiri river, and at one time they were in possession of the western part of Sibsagar, and the greater part of the Nowgong district. Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536, and the Kachari king was compelled to move his capital to Maibang. Subsequently they migrated to the plains of Cachar, and the last representative of the line was assassinated there in 1830. It seems, however, doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of

* The Dimasas are the section of the Kacharis who live in the Cachar district.

† Vide J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVII, Part 1, No. 1, 1898, page 99.

the Brahmaputra were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and, though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang, no doubt, from the same stock, but there is no evidence to show that they were ever united by the tie of a common nationality, or that the Kacharis of Goalpara were more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar, than are the Rabhas and Lalungs.

The following legend is prevalent amongst the Dimasa. It would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Goalpara.

**Dimasa
legend of the
separation
of the two
tribes.**

"Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day: but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety."

The ordinary Kachari of the north bank is an illiterate villager who has only vaguely heard of the Kacharis of Nowgong, but knows that their language differs slightly from his own. He is quite innocent of history, has

never heard of the Kachari raj, and as a source of information of anything prior to the immediate present is absolutely useless. A full account of the manners and customs of the Kacharis will be found in the Gazetteer of the Kamrup district.

Kalita.

The following account of the Kalitas is taken from the Census Report of 1901 :—

“ There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The
 Males ... 6,198 popular explanation is that Kali-
 Females ... 4,856 tas are Kshatriyas, who, fleeing
 from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their
 persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kullupta.
 Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having
 taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems some-
 what improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware,
 by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the
 Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for
 their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have
 originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on
 the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible sugges-
 tion is that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled
 in Assam at a time when the functional castes were still unknown
 in Bengal, and that the word ‘ Kalita ’ was originally applied to
 all Aryans who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided
 into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of
 professional sub-castes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said
 to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with
 the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the
 great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the
 traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work
 as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who
 has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour,
 and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself
 a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin
 of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who
 for three generations back have not been united by the ‘ hom ’
 ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and
 a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can intermarry with,
 and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and
 the practice apparently varies in different districts ; but there

seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two."

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and co-habitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after co-habitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl, who becomes pregnant, does not forfeit her position in the society, unless her lover is of a lower caste.

Koch.

The Koches of Goalpara are quite distinct from the Bakoch of Kamrup, who find their counterpart in Goalpara in the Rajbansi. The Goalpara Koch is, as a rule, a very humble person who eats pork and carries palanquins, and who is looked upon as inferior to the Mech or Rabha.

Males	...	...	3,720
Females	...	...	3,419

Meches.

The name Mech is popularly derived from Mlechcha, and the proper tribal name is Bara usually mispronounced Bodo, which like many tribal names, means "man." The bulk of the Mech tribe inhabit the grassy uplands at the foot of the Himalayas, and they are believed to be absolutely identical with the Kacharis.*

Male	...	...	36,804
Female	...	...	36,956

They were at one time divided into several subdivisions. The names of two of these, "the heaven born," *swargiariya*, and the *bargoariya*, "those who speak in the public assembly" suggest that there were originally sections of the tribe who arrogated to themselves a certain superiority over the common people. The names of the other sections which are called after the plantain, betel-nut, the tiger, fishes, etc., seem to be of totemistic origin. The subdivisions have fallen into practical desuetude, and are now neither endogamous or exogamous sections. The only restriction on marriage, provided that it takes place within the tribe, is the one, common to most people, that prohibits the union of near relations. They abstain from beef,

* Viswa Sing, the first Koch king is said to have been the son of a Mechani by Siva.

but eat pork and fowls and are naturally looked down upon by their Hindu neighbours. At the same time the Meches do not consider themselves to be by any means at the bottom of the social scale, and decline to admit Garos, Rabhas, and the lowest Hindu castes into their community.

The great bulk of the tribe live on the high grassy ^{Crops and trade.} uplands at the foot of the Himalayas. Their villages are generally fenced in, but their standard of domestic architecture is distinctly low. They grow vegetables and fruit trees in their gardens, which are carefully fenced to keep out pigs and fowls, but the presence of these creatures gives the village a dirty and untidy appearance. Agriculture is their main occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. It is raised in fields which are irrigated from the hill streams, and which yield bumper crops though the soil is often poor and sandy. The water is brought in channels, sometimes several miles in length, dug by the combined labour of the villagers. The people are dirty in their habits, and extremely unsophisticated. Many of them hardly understand a word of Bengali or Assamese, and such trade as is carried on is chiefly transacted by barter. They seldom go to market, but during the rains traders come up the rivers and exchange earthen pots, dried fish, salt, and other articles for rice, at rates of exchange which are usually fixed by the panchayat. Typical rates are 5 seers of paddy (unhusked rice) for one seer of salt, which is equivalent to about 12 annas a maund for paddy and 6 seers of paddy for an earthen pot, while

dried fish fetches about twenty times its weight in grain. About half the produce of their rice fields is consumed by the Meches in the form of beer. They require but little cash except to pay their revenue, and the little they require is obtained by the sale of mustard, or, where there is no land suited for this crop, by working in the forests of the district.

Social
customs and
religion.

Marriage in almost invariably adult, and it is thought desirable that the bride should be older than the groom. The price of a girl is usually about Rs. 100, and if the man cannot provide this sum he works in her father's house, each year of service being valued at Rs. 20. Pregnancy in an unmarried girl entails no disgrace, provided that the father of the child is a man of her own tribe, and is willing to make an honest woman of her. On the occasion of the marriage swine or fowls are offered to the Bura Deo, and the friends and relations are regaled with a Homeric feast. Wealthy Meches who have come under the influences of Hinduism burn their dead, but the usual practice is to bury the body, or simply to throw it into the jungle to be devoured by jackals. Their principal God is called Bura Deo, who is represented by the Siju or cactus found growing in every courtyard, but sacrifices are also offered to a large number of minor deities. An old woman called the *deodhani* acts as the mediatrix with heaven, and takes a principal part in the pujas performed at the harvesting of the summer and winter rice. She also is called in in times of trouble to ascertain what deity is offended, and how he best may be

propitiated. Hinduism has, however, left its mark upon the simple tribal faith, and the Meches worship Mahadeo, Bishahari, Kali, and other Hindu deities. The fowls that they offer to these gods would, however, be a source of dire offence to the orthodox Hindu. They are said to have vague ideas of a future life and of heaven and hell, but their theories on the subject are extremely hazy.

The Namasudra or Chandal is a boating and fishing **Namasudra.**

Males	...	...	3,608
Females	...	...	3,064

caste, said by Manu to have sprung from the union of a Brahman woman with a Sudra, and therefore to be the lowest of the low. They are a cheerful and hardworking people but are heartily despised by their Hindu neighbours. A degraded Brahman acts as their priest and the village barber declines to shave them. A section of the Chandals has formed itself into a separate caste called Hira. They work as potters but do not use the wheel, laying on the clay in strips. Many of the Chandals have now taken to agriculture as their occupation.

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race and appear **Rabhas.**

Male	...	...	18,445
Females	...	...	13,691

to be an offshoot of the Garos. Their language is closely akin to Garo, and their original habitat seems to have been the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. Certain sections of the tribe which live on the borders of that district, have no word for north and south but describe the former idea by Bhutan, the latter by Tura, a fact which pretty clearly indicates the locality from which they originally came. Most of the Rabhas have,

however, left their ancestral home and settled in Dar-rang, Kamrup, and Goalpara. In the last named district the bulk of the tribe are to be found south of the Brahmaputra.

The Rabhas are divided into the following seven sections—Rangdania, Pati, Maitariya, Koch, Bitlia, Dahuria, and Sangha. The Rangdania lay claim to a position of superiority, but inter-marriage is allowed with the Patis and Maitariyas. Inter-marriage between the first three sections and the lower subdivisions of the caste is permitted, but only on payment of a fine of about Rs. 100. The Rabhas look down upon the Garos and in their turn are treated as inferiors by the Mech. Like the other animistic tribes they are fond of beer, pork, and chicken, but they abstain from beef. Their villages are not unlike those of the Mech, they have gardens and fruit trees, but pigs and fowls do much damage, and the homestead is very different from the green dankery of bamboos, fruit trees, and vegetables which surrounds the houses of the Hindus. Agriculture is their usual occupation and rice the staple crop grown. What money they require is usually obtained by sale of surplus produce or work in the forests of the district. Adult marriage is in vogue, and wives in Goalpara are said to be extremely cheap. As a rule they can be had for nothing, and it is only occasionally that the lover has to pay thirty or forty rupees for the object of his affections. Vermilion is smeared on the bride's forehead, a practice which does not obtain amongst most of the aboriginal tribes, but

the essential part of the ceremony is the killing of two fowls and the feasting of the villagers. The Pati Rabhas go further than this, and model their procedure as closely as possible on the Hindu ceremony. The dead, too, are generally burned, unless an epidemic is in progress when it is thought that the infection might be conveyed in the smoke of the funeral pyre. Their chief god is called Rishi and is represented by a pot of rice on a bamboo platform, to which offerings of fowls and pigs are made. After death their souls are said to be absorbed into Rishi, a Buddhistic form of doctrine, but their views on this subject, like those of other animistic tribes, are probably extremely vague.

The Rajbansis of Goalpara are one of the race castes **Rajbansis.**

Males	...	...	58,746.	of Assam, and apparently
Females	...	...	57,039.	correspond to the Bar Koch

of Kamrup. The name Koch has, however, to be avoided, as in Goalpara it is only used by a small and degraded section of the tribe, with whom the Rajbansi will have no concern. The Rajbansi or Koches, to use the title by which the tribe is more generally known, are common not only in Assam but in Northern Bengal. They appear to be of mixed lineage. On the west their affinities are with the Dravidian stock, on the east with the Mongolian. The centre of the Koch power was in Kuch Bihar, and in Goalpara the tribe were in a position to be much affected by the traditions of the ruling race. The Koch Raja and his court were a considerable factor in their lives, and the tribesmen have assumed the honorific title of Rajbansi, or "men

of royal stock." There seems to be no doubt that the Koch and Rajbansi of Assam are one and the same caste, but in Rangpur, it is said that the Rajbansis seem to be a distinct tribe of Dravidian origin, possibly akin to the Tiwar, which affects to despise the Mongolian Koch.* Rajbansis are allowed to bring water for Brahmans, and they abstain entirely from pork and liquor. In matrimonial matters they display a pedantic desire to conform to the dictates of orthodox Hinduism. In Assam Proper, marriage is usually adult, and the services of the priest are often dispensed with. In Goalpara, the Rajbansis regularly perform the *hompura* rite, and marry their girls at a comparatively early age. Nearly 10 per cent. of the Rajbansi girls under 12 had performed the marriage ceremony in 1901, as compared with less than 2 per cent. amongst the Koches of Kamrup. The staple occupation of the caste is agriculture. Meches and Rabhas are said to be admitted into the category of Rajbansis on conversion, but they have first to pass through the preliminary stages of *Madahi*, and *Sarania*. A Rajbansi who has risen in the world generally claims to be a Bhanga-Kshatriya and styles himself Das.

Religion. Forty-four per cent. of the population in 1901 were Hindus, 28 per cent. Muhammadans, and 27 per cent. were still faithful to their tribal forms of religion. The actual numbers returned under these three heads in each of the subdivisions, will be found in Table IV.

Hindu Sects. 83 per cent. of the Hindus returned the special

* Report on the Census of Bengal, 1901, page 382

sect to which they attorned. Of these, 6 per cent. described themselves as Saktists, or worshipper of the generative powers as manifested in the female; 4 per cent. as followers of Siva; and 90 per cent. as Vaishnavites. Nearly one fifth of the Vaishnavites were said to be Mahapurushias.

This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Assam Census Report for 1901 :

"Sankar Deb. the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A.D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who according to traditions had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the King of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste, and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found this injunction a counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the Sattrra at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigotted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from smallpox in the neighbourhood of the Sattrra is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects

called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas" as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no god but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain. Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater, and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition.

A list of the temples, shrines, and *dhams* of Goalpara is annexed, but none of these places are of any note. The most important shrines are the ones at Jogighopa, Tukreswari, and Madhab. It is said that the thigh of Sati fell on the Tukreswari hill, when her body was dismembered by Vishnu. The place is, however, only visited by the people of the neighbourhood, so that this tradition is evidently not accepted by the Saktist community as a whole. A large number of monkeys live on the hill, and are fed by the devotees. The largest of these monkeys is styled their king and is served with food upon a silver dish. *Dhams* are priestly colleges, corresponding to the *sattras* of Assam, occupied as a rule by a few Vaishnavite monks. The most important *dham* is the one at Bistupur. Both *dhams* and temples possess, as a rule, small grants of land. The word temple is, however, almost a misnomer, as there is seldom anything more than a small hut enclosing the *lingum* or other sacred relic.

Name.	Pargana in which situated.	Name.	Pargana in which situated.
TEMPLES.			
<i>Dhubri Subdivision.</i>			
Alakjhari ...	Ghurlla.	Kali Mangal Chandi ...	Khuntaghat.
Mahamaya ...	Bagribari.	Madan Mohan ...	Do.
<i>Goalpara Subdivision.</i>		Madhab* ...	Do.
Bageswari ...	Khuntaghat.	Mahadeb ...	Habraghat
Buri Thakurani ...	Do.	Mangal Chandi ...	Khuntaghat
Chaturbhuj* ...	Do.	Narsingbari ...	Goalpara Town.
Dugdhanath ...	Do.	Radhakrishna ...	Habraghat.
Gopinath* ...	Do.	Ram Chandra ...	Khuntaghat.
Kala Chand Thakur ...	Do.	Sita Thakurani ...	Do.
		Syam Rai ...	Do.
		Syam Sundar ...	Goalpara Town.
		Tukreswari ...	Habraghat.

* There are two temples of the same name in the same pargana.

Name.	Pargana in which situated.	Name.	Pargana in which situated.
DHAMS.		<i>Married Kayastha Gosain.</i>	
<i>Dhubri Subdivision.</i>		Baguan	... Mechpara.
<i>Married Kayastha Gosain.</i>		Balipur	... Khuntaghat.
Chhatrasal	... Ghurlla.	Bishtupur	.. Do.
<i>Goalpara Subdivision.</i>		Dalgoma	... Habraghat.
<i>Married Brahman Gosain.</i>		<i>Ganak Gosain.</i>	
Kathalmuri	... Habraghat.	Srijangram	... Khuntaghat.

Animism.

Twenty-seven per cent. of the population in 1901 were still faithful to the primitive forms of tribal belief usually described as animistic. Broadly speaking their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads.

To account for the existence of the material world they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the stories of the creation given in most religious systems. The way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal proportion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that some body or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then

endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and try to appease him in whatever way they can. The bulk of the animistic population is found in the submontane tracts both north and south of the Brahmaputra.

The effect of the Muhammadan occupation of Goalpara is to be seen in the fact that in 1901, nearly 28 per cent. of the total population professed the faith of Islam, as compared with 9 per cent. in the neighbouring district of Kamrup. Practically all the Muhammadans belong to the Sunni sect. They are said to be fairly well grounded in the principles of their faith and to have been little affected by Hindu superstitions. There are no mosques of special sanctity, and prayers are usually said in a thatched hut. In Dhubri, however, there is the tomb of Shah Akbar, who was one of the Panch Pirs, or five wise men, who are venerated by Hindus and Muhammadans alike in Eastern Bengal. Assam was always regarded by the Musalmans as a country of witchcraft and enchantments. Mir Jumla accordingly summoned the Panch Pirs to his aid, as it was thought that they at any rate might overcome the spells of the Assamese, but unfortunately one of them succumbed himself and had to be buried in Dhubri. At the present day conversions to the faith of Islam are said to be far from common.

In 1901, there were 3,495 Christians in Goalpara, a figure which was only exceeded by the districts of the Khasi and Jaintia, and the Garo Hills. Successive enumerations have disclosed a considerable increase

amongst the native Christian population, the figures being, 1881, 392; 1891, 1,547; and 1901, 3,429. 2,122 of these persons described themselves as Baptists; and were censused in the Goalpara subdivision, where there is a branch of the American Baptist Mission; 1,282 were disciples of the Lutheran Mission that founded the Santal colony north of Dhubri, an account of which will be found in Chapter VII.

There is a most prosperous Christian village at Nisangram, near Damra, on the borders of the Garo Hills. This community was founded by two converted Garos, who in 1863, opened a school for Garo children at Damra. They then proceeded to lease some flat land from the Bijni Raja, invited their fellow tribesmen from the hills, and founded a flourishing village community at a place called Nisangram, which in 1904, occupied about 2,000 bighas of fertile and well irrigated rice land. There are about 150 houses in the village with its adjoining hamlets, 100 of which are occupied by Christian families. It is the largest Garo village in the Province, and the church numbered, in 1904, over 700 members. The people support their own pastor, and contribute to the maintenance of schools, and of six evangelists who are employed in preaching to the Garos. They also subscribe towards the support of an evangelist working amongst a tribe in Upper Assam. They have built, and contribute largely towards the support of three schools in Nisangram, and have built a chapel with belfry and bell, glazed doors, and windows. For thrift, prosperity, and general respectability the Garos

of Nisangram are an example to the remainder of the tribe.

The figures in the margin give details for other **Minor Religions.** religions that were not strongly represented in the district at the census of

Jains ..	...	...	457
Buddhists	...	...	346
Brahmos	...	...	50
Sikhs ...	...	...	2

1901. The Jains were most of them traders from Marwar. The Buddhists were Bhutias and Nepalese. The Brahmos represent the more highly educated section of the community and nearly all of them were living in Dhubri town. Though there are very few Sikhs in Goalpara, Dhubri, which is known to them as Damdam Gurudwara, is a place of pilgrimage for the followers of the Sikh faith. The small hill at Dhubri is said to have been artificially constructed in 1665 A. D., at the request of Guru Tez Bahadur. The Muhammadan army brought great quantities of earth on their shields from the Rangamati hill, and, when the Assamese flooded the country, they took refuge on the hillock they had so laboriously constructed. A small Sikh temple now stands at the foot of the hill.

As in the rest of Assam agriculture is the ordinary **Occupation.** occupation of the people, but the proportion of agriculturists, (84 per cent.), though high, is considerably below the average for the Assam Valley. The most densely populated portions of the district are permanently settled, and the number of persons supported by cultivation in 1901, who held direct from the state was only 72,700, as compared with 275,500 who were classified as tenants. The different classes of sub-tenure

and the rates of rent paid are discussed in the section on rents, wages, and prices. One of the most peculiar features in the economic organization of Assam, and one of the principal obstacles to its natural development, is the complete absence of a labouring class. In this respect, Goalpara, at first sight, appears to differ from the rest of the Brahmaputra Valley, as, in 1901, nearly eight per cent. of the population were said to be supported by farm service and field labour. The great majority of these labourers were, however, women. These women were, in all probability, only the wives and daughters of the ordinary cultivator, who help him to plant his seedlings and cut his paddy, and do not represent a labouring class in the sense in which that word is ordinarily understood. Other occupations that in 1901 supported more than one per cent. of the total population, were fishing, dealing in grain, general labour, and begging. Most of the general labourers were employed on the railway which was under construction in the district in that year. The great majority of the grain dealers were women, and, like the agricultural labourers, were probably merely the wives and daughters of the petty farmer. With an urban population of only a little over two per cent. of the whole, it is not to be expected that non-agricultural occupations would be of much importance in the district. The occupations recorded at the Census of 1901 were divided into eight main classes and the numbers returned under each head were as follows :—

Government 1647, or less than half per cent., Pasture

and agriculture 387,440, or 84 per cent., Personal services 5,538 or 1 per cent., Preparation and supply of material substances 37,143, or 8 per cent., Commerce transport and storage 7,403, or 2 per cent., Professions 4,156 or 1 per cent., Unskilled labour not agricultural 10,654 or 2 per cent., Means of livelihood independent of occupation 8,071 or 2 per cent. total 462,052.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulse—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting the productiveness of land—Garden crops—Tea—Yield and value of crops—General remarks—Livestock—Forests—Classification of reserved forests—System of management.

**Crops
grown.**

The staple food crop of the district is rice. Other important crops are mustard, pulse, and wheat, which is believed to cover about 10,000 acres in the western portion of the district. Millets, such as *kaon* (*setaria italica*) and *china* (*panicum miliaceum*), are grown on sandy soils which are exposed to flood, as they can nearly always be reaped before the waters rise. Jute is largely grown for export; and it is said that as much as 2,000 acres are under the tobacco plant. Sugarcane is not much in favour, and the area under tea is insignificant. A little cotton is grown on the hills to the south of the district, but the bulk of the cotton that passes through Goalpara is imported from the Garo Hills. The general system of cultivation and the way in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice can be classified under three main heads *roa*, *ashu* or *bitri*, and *boa*. *Roa dhan* or transplanted paddy is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*bichan*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times, and is carefully manured with cowdung and sweepings. The soil is not, however, reduced to a puddle. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June, and, during the time that this operation is going on, water is sprinkled over the bed from a bamboo scoop. It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*guchi*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these handfuls are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, and on the time

Rice : *roa*.

at which they are put out. Seedlings planted at the beginning of the season will be placed eighteen inches apart, those planted later not more than six. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September. The work is of a most arduous description and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but, about the beginning of October, they begin to fill and the field to turn to a rich yellow.

From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. The women grasp a handful of ears and cut them off near the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary, the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six to eight *muthis* form an *athi*, and five or six *athis* a *bojha*. A *bojha* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *bankua*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men. The straw is not left in the fields as is customary in Upper Assam, but is stored and used as fodder; and is gradually acquiring a commercial value.

Ashu.

Ashu is generally sown broad-cast, and is grown under two different sets of conditions. When sown on marshy

land the usual procedure is as follows. In May, the jungle is cut down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, and ploughing begins at the beginning of February. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown, and the land again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of July. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed.

Ashu is sometimes sown in conjunction with *boa*, in the hope that, if the earlier crop is destroyed, the longer stemmed and sturdier *boa* may at any rate survive. It is also sown on high lands near the village site. The soil is poor, but is manured with the sweepings of the courtyard and the cowshed. Where grain is urgently required a crop of summer rice is sometimes taken from fields which are subsequently planted with *roa*. This is seldom done except in the Khuntaghat and Habraghat parganas. *Ashu* is also occasionally transplanted, the system of cultivation employed being substantially the same as that in force for *roa*. It is sown in the beginning of April, transplanted some six week later,

and reaped about the beginning of August. Transplanted *ashu* is generally grown on irrigated land. The crop ripens earlier than *roa* and thus gives a quicker return on the labour expended in its production.

Boa dhan.

Boa dhan is sown broadcast about the middle of March. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *roa* and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of December and is harvested in the same way as *roa*. There are several kinds of *boa* dhan, some of which increase in length as the water rises, so that the stalk finally attains to most extraordinary dimensions. One variety, which is known as *lewa boa*, is said to be sometimes as much as 24 feet long. *Mera boa* will grow to 15 feet in length, and *kekoa* and *salmati* to 18 feet. In Parbatjoar the longest variety is known as *amnakasha*. If there is a sudden flood and the rice is overtopped for any length of time the plant is drowned; but, when the water rises gradually, the rapid growth of the stalk keeps the ear above the level of the water.

Mustard.

Mustard, as has been already said, is often grown in conjunction with *ashu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps dug out, and the land is then ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the end of October, and the plant is ready to be pulled from the field about the middle of January. It

is generally left to dry for a few days, and is then tied in bundles and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle. Mustard is also grown on land which has been cropped with jute, and derives much benefit from the manure that is freely bestowed upon the latter crop. There is also a considerable area under mustard in the Bijni Duar.

Pulse is either grown on the riparian flats or on the higher land which has been cropped with summer rice. The following are the principal varieties of pulse raised in Goalpara. *Mash kalai*, (*phaseolus mungo* var. *radiatus*) a large dark coloured variety. The seed is generally sown in September and the crop is ripe about three or four months later. *Thaguri kalai* smaller and lighter coloured; *mug* (*phaseolus mungo* linn.); *khesari* (*lathyrus sativus*) which is sown in October or November and takes six months to ripen; *masuri* (*lens esculenta*) and *matar* (*pisum arvense*) which are cultivated in much the same way as *khesari*; and *arhar* (*cajanus indicus*) which is sown in April and May and takes about ten months to ripen.

The cultivation of jute entails the expenditure of a considerable amount of time and trouble, and stiff soils are sometimes ploughed as many as ten times. When it is sown on land which has not been enriched by deposits of the river's silt, manure is extensively employed. The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from fifteen to twenty days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up,

broken a foot or two from the lower end, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out. The fibres are then dried and are ready for transport to the market. Small patches of *khunkhora* or rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes where they are heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale. A little cotton is also grown on the hills in the south of the district.

**Storage and
threshing of
grain.**

When the paddy is brought from the field it is at once threshed out by the cattle.* It is next passed through a sieve and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and dropped slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. Paddy is stored in separate granaries called *gola*, but mustard, pulse, and the smaller grains in huge drums called *dhols*.

**Agricultural
implements:
the Plough.**

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made from the mango or sal tree, or from some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body, which are usually all in one piece, the pole, which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of wood,

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, D. L. R. & A, showed that nine bullocks took only 2 hours and 8 minutes to tread out $7\frac{1}{2}$ mds. of paddy.

fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he usually makes for himself, though Garos and Meches sometimes make ploughs for sale. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs. and when cattle are used the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder about eight feet in length, on which two men stand as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*kushi bari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*ails*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have

Other
implements.

also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. In *ashu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bedha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock, when the plants are about six inches high. The *hachini*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ashu* rice. A large wooden mortar *oran*, and pestle *gain*, are generally used to husk the paddy.

Sugarcane. Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown on high land near the village site, and, as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and, as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *mugi* or white stands about seven feet high, and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *rangi* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *khagrai* is tall, hard, and very thin, and, though it does not yield so much juice as some of the other kinds, the quality of the molasses is very good. The red and white varieties of Bombay are tall and juicy, but the percentage of molasses obtained from a given quantity of juice is rather small. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout

hedge of *arhar dal* (*cajanus indicus*); but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of the ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

The iron sugarcane mill has now almost entirely displaced the home made mill of wood. When twelve or fifteen gallons of juice have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and generally has two circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potters clay. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel and stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. Sugar is extracted from molasses by the following process. The molasses are placed in a bamboo basket on a bamboo stool which is set over a pan. The basket is covered with a kind of grass called *khar*, which is continually sprinkled with water to keep it moist. At the end of about three weeks part of the molasses has crystallized into white sugar (*dalua chini*); the refuse (*naligur*)

Preparation
of molasses.

has trickled into the basket and is generally used not to eat but to mix with tobacco.

Causes
affecting
produc-
tiveness
of land.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes, the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals and birds, and shade. The first named factor is probably of most importance, as irrigated land in the submontane tracts yields bumper crops from poor and sandy soil. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra, to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. In popular parlance land is divided into the following four classes, according as it yields a 16, 12, 8, or 4 anna crop—*awel*, *duem*, *suem*, and *ohaharam*. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, and elephants and monkeys south of the Brahmaputra, field rats, and a bird called the *kaim*. Serious damage is sometimes done by an insect called the *gandhi* (*leptocorisa acuta*). It is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August and is particularly *en evidence* during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and pushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. A worm

called *utroonga* also does damage to young plants. Rain is wanted when *roa* is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ashu* and *boa*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *manua*, *cheni champa*, and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again sub-divided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *manua* is a somewhat smaller tree, with a white and slightly acid fruit. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead, where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure. The finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earth worms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are placed in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches

deep, and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take about fourteen months to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn to fruit. The plaintain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower and the inner part of the trunk are much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution distilled from the sheaths and the corm is often used in place of salt. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *khar*, is used in place of salt, as a hair wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.

Other garden
crops.

The betelnut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the villagers are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and the nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Mangoes, jack fruit, lemons, and cocoanut are also common. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured

beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is slightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing they are dried under a shed. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe the leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach (*basella alba*), different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), and radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka sag* (*rumex vesicarius*), and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*), with potatoes, onions, garlic, chillies, ginger, and turmeric.

Tea is a crop of no importance in Goalpara. There are only four small gardens in the district which are situated at Lalkura, Marnai, and Tamai. The total area under plant is 700 acres. A full account of the tea industry will be found in the Gazetteers of the Sibsagar or Lakhimpur districts. Tea.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows Yield and value of crops.

the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department. These figures only represent a general mean

			lb.	
<i>Roa</i>	...	...	1,000	there are many fields whose
<i>Ashu</i>	...	...	850	outturn varies largely from

the average. The yield of

rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the ryots vary to some extent in different parts of the district but probably average about Rs. 1 to 1-2 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *roa* is from 20 to 22 rupees: and from one of *ashu* from 17 to 19 rupees.

**General
remarks.**

Generally speaking the Hindus and Muhammadans of Goalpara are more careful and scientific cultivators than the inhabitants of Upper Assam. Manure is used for mustard and jute, and in the south-western corner of the district the villagers keep their cattle in the fields so that they may enrich them with their droppings. In the northern and eastern part of the district recourse is very generally had to irrigation. The villagers combine to dam the streams and *bils*, and carry the water through little channels (*dongs*) to their fields. Many of these channels are several miles in length, and some of them have attained to the dimensions of considerable streams. New staples seem to be adopted more readily in Goalpara than in Upper Assam. Jute

is cultivated on a commercial scale, and potatoes and various kinds of millets and pulses are coming into favour.

As in the rest of Assam the buffaloes are fine up-**Live stock.** standing animals, but the cattle as a rule are miserable little creatures. The goats are no better than the cattle and give very little milk. The only two varieties of buffaloes which seem to be recognised in the district are the *kachhar* and *bangar*. The former give a larger yield of milk and consequently command a higher price. The price of a bull buffalo ranges from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50, and of a cow from Rs. 15 to Rs. 70. The average price seems to be about Rs. 30 for the one and Rs. 40 for the other. Bullocks cost from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 the pair, and cows from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15 each; though the price of a cow is said to be sometimes as low as Rs. 8, sometimes as high as Rs. 25. In the Eastern Duars, Nepalese cattle are occasionally to be found. They are said to be fine animals, almost as large as buffaloes. Cattle are grazed in swamps and marshes in the dry season, and on hills and high land lying waste in the rains. Generally speaking there does not seem to be any dearth of suitable pasture land, and it is only in the south-western portion of the district that the cattle have to be fed on paddy straw in the rains.

The southern half of the district is permanently **Forests.** settled and the Government forests are thus of necessity all situated in the Eastern Duars. They are divided into two classes, the reserves, which on June 30th 1904

covered an area of 787 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which on the same date covered an area of 558 square miles. Unclassed state forest is, however, simply waste land at the disposal of the Government. The villagers are allowed to take it up at will for cultivation, and the greater part of it is entirely destitute of anything in the shape of tree growth.

Classification of reserved forests.

The 787 square miles of reserved forest are classified as follows: the figures in brackets represent the area in square miles. Pure sal forest (163); mixed sal forest (45); mixed forest (178); evergreen forest (83); sisu forest (4); khair forest (9); sisu and khair (26); grass land (183); land reserved for forest villages nearly all grass (66); rivers and swamps (24); other land (6). A considerable portion of the area shown as mixed forest would, however, be more properly classified as grass land,* though, now that these savannahs are protected from fire, the tracts that are suitable for the growth of trees are rapidly filling up with soft timber.

The reserves are seven in number. Bhumeswar is an isolated hill covering an area of 7 square miles in the extreme south east corner of the Sidli duar. It contains pure and mixed sal forest, but more than half the total area consists of precipitous slopes covered with rocks and grass. The Guma reserve is another isolated forest covering an area of 26 square miles, about 30

* Vide page 6 of Notes on the Goalpara Forest Division by Mr. T. J. Campbell. Shillong, 1896. This work is the authority for most of the statements made with regard to the Goalpara forests.

miles north of Dhubri. The high land is covered with almost pure sal forest, and the strips of low lying ground with which it is intersected, are gradually filling up with sum (*machilus odoratissima*). The rest of the forests lie at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. The Kachugaon, Ripu, Bengtol, and Chirang reserves form a compact block, 558 square miles in area, in the north-west corner of the district. Then comes a stretch of unreserved land occupied by the valley of the Ai, and in the north-east corner is the Bijni reserve which covers 196 square miles.

The Kachugaon reserve covers an area of 66 square miles, and is situated to the south of the Ripu forest. It contains hardly any timber of value, but was constituted a reserve in 1902 to enable the department to establish forest villages, with the object of providing a permanent labour supply for the Ripu reserve. The Ripu forest lies at the foot of the Bhutan Hills between the Sankosh and the Saralbhanga, and covers an area of 235 square miles. The sal reaches its best development in this reserve on the ridges between the numerous streams. Khair and sisu are found along the river beds, and there is a considerable area of mixed forest and grass land. The Chirang forest lies east of the Ripu and covers an area of 234 square miles. To the north it consists of evergreen forest, containing very valuable and well grown timber though its inaccessibility has hitherto precluded its exploitation; to the south it is well stocked with sal. The Bengtol forest, which lies east of Chirang, only covers an area of 23 square

miles. It contains sal in clumps, but there are large areas of grass land which are gradually filling up with soft woods. Considerably more than half the Bijni reserve consisted originally of grass land, which has, under the influence of fire protection, rapidly filled up with soft woods. The bulk of the remainder is mixed deciduous forest. Along the river banks there is a certain quantity of khair and sisu. No revenue has ever been realized from this reserve. The Bijni, Chirang, Ripu, and Guma forests were originally formed into reserves in 1875, and have since that date received various additions. The Bengtol and Bhumeswar hill reserves were not notified till 1883.

Trees.

The following are the principal trees which are found in the district:—sal (*shorea robusta*), sissu (*dalbergia sissoo*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), champa (*melicia champaca*), jarul or ajhar (*lagerstrœmia flos reginæ*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), poma or toon (*cedrela toona*), khair (*acacia catechu*), sida (*lagerstrœmia parviflora*), khakan (*duabanga sonneratioides*), gugra (*schima molis*), nahor (*mesua ferrea*), dowki poma (*alseodaphne*), patamari (*amoora spectabilis*), simul (*bombax malabaricum*), bola (*morus lævigata*), uriam (*bischoffia javanica*), aksi (*dillennia pentagyna*), kumbi (*careya arborea*), udal (*sterculia villosa*), harra (*terminalia citrina*), solet (*terminalia tomentosa*), bahera (*terminalia belerica*), paroli or ser pang (*stereospermum chelonoides*), jia (*garuga pinnata*), and gomari (*gmelina arborea*). Sal is, however, the only timber in which there is any appreciable trade.

A working plan for sal was prepared between 1889 and 1894 for the period from 1893 to 1903. A simple plan for trees other than sal was introduced in 1896 for the same period. The girth of exploitable trees is fixed at 5 feet. These plans are now under revision. Owing to want of purchasers it has never been found possible to dispose of the total number of trees permitted by the plan, and in some years there has been a serious deficit. On the other hand where the demand has been equal to the fixed yield the prescribed number of trees was not found upon the ground, and the number of marketable trees was probably over estimated.

System of
management

Trees selected by purchasers are felled early in the year, and cut into logs (*dhums*) between 6 and 7 feet in length, and over $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet in girth. They are roughly dressed and rolled to the neighbourhood of the nearest river. Towards the end of the rains, when there is plenty of water but no risk of flood, they are attached to canoes and floated down. This precaution is necessary as the specific gravity of sal is greater than that of water. These *dhums* are sold to purchasers from Eastern Bengal where they are used for boat building. There is also a considerable demand for sal posts, but this is principally met from the forests of the Zamin-dars. The construction of the Eastern Bengal State Railway through the Goalpara district has created a large demand for sleepers which has been met by the department. Labour is very difficult to procure and in order to facilitate the extraction of the timber $9\frac{1}{2}$ miles of portable tramway have been purchased.

Table VIII shows the revenue derived from each reserve. The bulk of the receipts are obtained from the Ripu, Chirang, and Guma forests. Sal is sold standing at Rs. 10 per tree or annas six per cubic foot at present schedule rates. Dead and fallen sal timber is sold at the rates entered in the schedule at page 159 of the Assam Forest Manual. First class trees other than sal sell at Rs. 6 each.* All other kinds at Rs. 2 each. Sal logs at the sale depots are sold at Re. 1 per cubic foot for timber over 4 ft in girth, annas twelve for timber between 3 and 4 feet in girth, and annas eight for logs under 3 feet. Sawn sal timber is now sold at Rs. 1-12 to Rs. 2 per cubic foot. Sleepers fetch Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-4 for metre gauge lines. The present sale depots are at Bilasipara on the Brahmaputra river, Bagribari on the Tipkai river, Kachukata on the Gora-fela river, and Barabadha on the Baunai river. For departmental purposes the forests are divided into four ranges, the Guma, Western, Eastern, and Bijni, ranges; and the Western and Eastern ranges are further subdivided into four circles. Fire and climbers do considerable injury. Table IX shows the area annually protected from fire and the cost incurred, and the out-turn of timber and fuel from the reserves and unclassed state forests. Goalpara is the only district in the Assam Valley in which forest operations are carried on on a commercial scale. Work is, however, much hampered by the scarcity and high price of labour, and the difficulty of communications, and good management is

* A list of these trees will be found at page 45 of the Assam Forest Manual.

required to ensure a profit on departmental operations. The sal timber of Goalpara is exported by boat to Eastern and Lower Bengal. The principal market is at Dacca but the districts of Mymensingh, Pabna, Faridpur, and Rangpur also absorb a large quantity. Hitherto transport by boat only has been possible, but the completion of the railway will probably alter present conditions by opening inland markets.

Timber is also extracted from the forests of the ^{The} Zamindars of Bijni, Chapar, Gauripur, Mechpara, and ^{Zamindari} forests. Parbatjoar. It is generally worked out in the form of poles.

CHAPTER V.

ARTS AND INDUSTRIES.

Industries—Silk—Pottery—Brass and Bell-Metal—Weaving—Lac—
Mat-making—Fishing.

Industries. The industries of Goalpara are of very small importance. Tea is manufactured, but the total output in 1903 was less than 200,000 lbs. A full description of the system of manufacture will be found in the gazetteers of the Lakhimpur or Sibsagar districts. Other industries include the rearing of the *eri* silk worm, the manufacture of rough earthenware and metal vessels, the weaving of cotton cloth, the rearing of the lac insect, and the manufacture of wickerwork mats and baskets.

silk. The silk industry is not nearly so important as in Assam Proper. *Pat* and *muga* are not reared and the only silk produced is that obtained from the *eri* worm. This worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. The females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty.

The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to fifteen days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread.

The industry is not of very much importance and very little silk is prepared for sale. Rangjuli, North Salmara, and the Eastern Duars are the chief silk producing tracts. The most useful garment made of *eri* is the *bor kapor* or *gilap* a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12.

The earth used by potters is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well-kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel

Pottery.

revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun-dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun-dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin 16 inches long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*hari and paitta*), large and small water jars (*kulsi*, and *bashna*), and larger vessels (*hari and janga*) with lamps, pipes, and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the pottery made by local men is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, or made by potters from other parts of India, who come up to Goalpara in the winter and return to their homes before the breaking of the rains. The principal centres of the industry are at Fakirganj, Gauripur, Rupsi Satyapur, Rokakhata, Dubapara, and Marnai.

Brass and bell metal utensils are only manu-
 factured by temporary visitors from Sarthaibari and Hajo in Kamrup. Bell metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota, bati*), jars for holding water (*kulsi gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes to carry betel nut and lime (*tema, temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*). Brass and bell metal.

The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike, and one or more looms are to be seen in the courtyard of almost every house. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, the material employed is generally imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shop-keeper. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a Weaving.

rectangle about 5' 10" $\times$ 2' 6", and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam," published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is about ten rupees, and as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. There is, however, but little doubt that weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *patanis* or cloths worn by women which are tied above the breast, large cloths called *gilap* or *bor kapor*, smaller shawls *pachara*, and *gamchas* or napkins often worn on the head.

Lac. Lac is reared on various members of the ficus family such as *pakri* (*ficus rumphii*), and on arhar (*cajanus indicus*), *buldobuk* (*kydia calcyna*), *dhop* (*ficus altissima*), *kukursota* (*grewia multiflora*), and other trees, but as far as is known the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which the insect has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which

the next crop is to be grown. After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to 2 maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Almost all the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac. Most of the lac is raised by Garos, Rabhas, and Kacharis, the principal centres of the industry being Rangjuli, Darangiri, and Dhupdhara in the Habraghat pargana; and Dharidhari, Makri, and Khormauza in the Mechpara pargana. The cultivation of lac has only recently been introduced into the Dhubri subdivision.

Four kinds of mats are made in Goalpara, *i.e.*, *pati*, *kath*, *dhara*, and *kathiadhara*. *Pati* mats are manufactured by the Patia caste from the *patidoia* (*maranta dichotoma*), and cost from annas 8 to a rupee. *Kath* mats are made of *moj* (*saccharum ciliare*) and are woven in a frame much as cotton is woven on the loom. They are generally made to use and not to sell, but if they come to market cost from annas 6 to

annas 10. *Dhara* mats are made of plaited bamboo, and *kathiadhara* of reed. Toys are also made of sola pith by Malakars and a few Rajbansis in parganas Ghurla, Jamira, Parbatjoar, Khuntaghat, and Kalu-malupara, who sometimes turn-out quite artistic little images of gods and goddesses which cost some three or four rupees a piece. A rough kind of broad brimmed hat is also made from split bamboo and the leaves of the nahor (*mesua ferrea*) or sal tree (*shorea robusta*).

The fishing industry.

Fish are caught for home consumption by most sections of the community, but the professional fisherman is looked down upon and is generally a member of one of the humble castes such as the Jhalo, the Dom or Nadiyal, and the Hira, Manjhi, and Malla, amongst the Hindus; and the Datia amongst the Muhammadans. During the cold weather large quantities of fish are despatched from Dhubri to Calcutta, and to various places in Kuch Bihar and Rangpur in the neighbourhood of the railway. Fish is often salted or dried for use in Goalpara, but is not generally exported in this state. The varieties most esteemed for the table are the hilsa (*clupea ilisha*), the rui (*labeo rohita*), the chital (*notopterus chitala*), the bacha (*eutropiichthys vacha*), the magur (*clarias magur*), the ari (*arius*), the sol, the katla (*catla buehanani*) and the ghariya (*belone cancila*).

The principal nets in use are (1) the *uthar*, a large net which is spread on the surface of the water from a boat. The sides are weighted and sink together, and any fish that were swimming in the area covered are caught in the pockets round the weighted edges, (2) the *jata jal*, a triangular net the two sides of which are fastened

to two bamboos joined at the apex. A little below their junction the bamboos are fastened to two stout posts, on which they work on a pivot. The base of the net is allowed to sink into the water, and pressure is then applied to the vertex which raises the net and its contents. (3) the *bihiri* and *langi* nets, which are hung from crossed bamboos and are lowered from above into the water. (4) the *tanapaji* an ordinary drag net, (5) the *ber paji*, one end of which is fastened to a bamboo post in the water and the other end brought round in a circle, which is gradually contracted till all the fish within are caught; and (6) the *langi* a net which has two of its corners tied a little above the water to two stout posts. The front of the net is then lowered into the fishery and drawn up again, much as a drawbridge is raised and lowered. The *polo* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker work. It is generally used by women who walk through shallow water and keep pressing the rim of the glass on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *Juluki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *Jaka* is a species of wicker work shovel, which, like the *polo*, is generally used by women. They place the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa*, *gui*, *bhari*, *darki*, *khaidon* and *katia* are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, and are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

CHAPTER VI.
ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.
COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWNS
AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Rents—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of people—Conventional restrictions—Means of communication—Railways—Roads—Post and telegraph—Trade—Markets and fairs—Towns—Local Boards.

Rents. The rent law in force in Goalpara is Act VIII. B. C. of 1869. It is, however, seldom necessary to have recourse to law, and the total number of rent and title suits instituted in 1903 was only 250. Over the greater part of the district the population is extremely sparse, and it is this, no doubt, that has tended to prevent the growth of intermediate tenures between the cultivator and the zamindar. Except in the Gauripur and Karai-bari estates and in pargana Taria, the man who actually tills the soil holds as a rule direct from the zamindar. The *karari* are a special class of tenant, who break up land without previous measurement, and acquire no rights over the land so broken up. The *sukbasha* tenants in the Bijni estate hold at privileged rates of revenue, but are required to render certain services to their landlords. The relations between landlord and tenant seem to be satisfactory on the whole. Rents, as will be seen

from Table XIV A, are not high, and nowhere exceed Re. 1 per *bigha* for the best land cultivated with transplanted rice; while, in less favourable localities, the rate assessed is not even half that sum. Such cesses as are levied are not oppressive. In the Mechpara pargana, some opposition was of recent years aroused by the attempts of the landlord to levy a cess on forest produce removed for home consumption. No such charge is made either by Government or by the Bijni estate, and it was accordingly resented by the people.

In the Guma duar, a tract of 25 square miles was reserved in 1880 for the use of Santals, who were to be settled there by members of the Norwegian Indian Home Mission to that tribe. The colonists pay no revenue for the land occupied by their homesteads, and *rupit* and *faringati* land can be held free of revenue for the first year. In the second year they pay half the ordinary rates, and in the third year the full rates for the duar. In June 1904, the total number of colonists was 2,400 persons, who held nearly 3,200 acres of land or about one-fifth of the total area reserved for them. The people live in excellent houses, and the general appearance of their villages is one of quite unusual prosperity. The Santal colony.

The daily wages of an ordinary cooly range from 4 to 6 annas a day, but labour of this kind is not easily obtainable. Farm labourers are often paid in kind. Servants are usually paid from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5 per *men-sem*, in addition to their food. Advances are also given to induce them to take service. Wages.

Prices.

The abstract in the margin shows the average number of seers of common rice to be purchased for a rupee in each of the four decades ending with 1902. This

Average.	Seers per rupee.
1868-1872 ...	20.5
1873-1882 ...	17.1
1883-1892 ...	15.1
1893-1902 ...	11.9

statement shows a progressive rise in price, but the low average of the last decade is principally due to the fact that it includes several years in which famine was raging in India. In February 1904 and 1905, common rice was selling at Dhubri at the rate of 16 seers to the rupee. As the immense bulk of the population are cultivators, it is clear, that, so long as the local harvest is a good one, they do not suffer from a rise in prices. Since the reduction of the salt tax in 1903, the price of salt has fallen from 10 seers to 12 seers, for the rupee. Pulse is fairly steady at Rs. 2-8 the maund. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table X.

Food and dress.

The staple food of the people is boiled rice eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet. Goats' flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable and is frequently procurable. The animistic tribes are very fond of pork, and consume large quantities of a strong fermented beer prepared from rice.

Sweatmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and ghi. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhoti* or waist-cloth, with a

big shawl or wrapper, and generally a cotton coat or waist-coat. Hindu and Muhammadan women wear a *sari* or piece of cotton cloth, 15 feet long and 4 feet broad, which is fastened round the waist to form a petticoat and then brought over the head and shoulder so as to cover the rest of the body. Mech and Rabha women wear a smock drawn tightly across the bust and reaching half way down the calf. Men generally go bareheaded, but sometimes twist a handkerchief round their heads when working in the fields, and on sunny and rainy days have recourse to leaf umbrellas. Wooden sandals are in great request amongst all sections of the community.

The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally **Dwellings.** separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth, which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses which are often little more than huts. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The effect is extremely picturesque, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the whole place very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back, there is generally a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The walls of the house are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo; the roof, of thatch, the rafters and the posts of bamboo. The general standard of

architecture is far from high, but Hindus and Muhammadans generally occupy somewhat larger and better built houses than those that are usually seen in Upper Assam, and the houses of the Muhammadans are sometimes quite commodious. The houses of the middle class are built on practically the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell metal utensils, glass bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old clothes, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses.

Economic
condition
of
people.

Indebtedness is reported by the local officers to be fairly common, but it is probably in few cases that it is of a serious character. The rate of interest charged is said to vary from 12 to 60 per cent. per annum. Money is usually borrowed to pay for cattle, or marriage or *sradh* ceremonies, or, as a temporary expedient, to satisfy the demands of the rent collector. Cash is generally obtained by the sale of paddy, mustard, or jute, or by working in the forests. In this respect the position of the Goalpara raiyat is not so satisfactory as that of the inhabitants of Upper Assam, as there is no garden population to absorb his surplus produce. The natives of the district seldom work as coolies. They supplied only a very small part of the labour engaged in the construction of the railway, and the number

of Meches, Rabhas, or Kacharis who go to the tea gardens of Assam Proper is very small.

The people suffer from comparatively few conventional restrictions, other than those common to all Hindus. The Muhammadans do not plough upon a Friday. The Hindus abstain in the same way on the day when the moon is new and full, and on the last day of the month. In Bijni it is said that the villagers begin to transplant their *roa* paddy on a Wednesday or a Thursday, and to sow the *ashu* on a Tuesday or a Saturday. The last two days are, however, considered unsuitable for house building, and some hold that they are equally inauspicious for the transplantation of paddy. Conventional restrictions.

In the early days of our occupation of the Province communications with the outer world were usually maintained by water. The dak from Calcutta came overland *via* Rangpur, but the road was almost impassable in the rains. Boats took from twenty-five to thirty-five days to go from Goalpara to Calcutta, while the journey up stream occupied some eight days longer.* Means of communication.
Steamer.

This was the state of things till 1848, when the Government steamers were first deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. The experiment was attended with success, and, in 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks to Assam. Passengers were carried by these boats, but the journey, though not uncomfortable, was still tedious and uncertain. In

* McCosh's topography of Assam page 9.

1884, a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri. From Dhubri a steamer plied to Jatrampur, which had been connected by rail with Calcutta in 1884. The ports of call in the Goalpara district are Dhubri, Bilasipara, Goalpara, and Dalgoma. At the present day (1905), a through steamer carrying the mails runs every day from Dhubri to Gauhati, and from Gauhati to Dhubri. Another vessel plies daily in each direction between Goalundo and Dibrugarh, and calls at all the ports in the Goalpara district. Large cargo steamers with attendant flats also visit these places at stated intervals. Cargo is carried by the smaller passenger boats as well as by the larger steamers, but the freights charged are naturally somewhat higher. These steamers are owned and managed by the India General Steam Navigation Company, and the Rivers Steam Navigation Company.

Railways. In 1902, Dhubri was connected with Calcutta by rail. The line, which is a branch of the Eastern Bengal State Railway, enters the district at the Bishkhoa Nadi, and passes by the stations of Golakganj, Balajan, and Gauripur before reaching Dhubri. From Golakganj a line is now under construction which will pass through the districts of Goalpara and Kamrup till it reaches the Brahmaputra at a point opposite Gauhati, the present terminus of the Assam Valley branch of the Assam Bengal Railway. There will be stations in Goalpara district at Basbari, Tipkai Sisapani, Fakiragram, Kokrajhar, Basugaon, Abhayapuri, and Bijni, but no portion of this line is as yet (1905) open to traffic.

Two trunk roads run through the district. The north trunk road starts from Dhubri, and runs in a sweeping curve first west and then east, but always chiefly north, to Kachugaon nearly 50 miles away. There are inspection bungalows at the following places, the figures in brackets indicate the length of the stage. Balajan (10 miles), Paglarhat ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Dingdinga ($10\frac{3}{4}$ miles), and Kachugaon ($19\frac{1}{2}$ miles). At the latter place the road turns sharply to the east, and runs through the Eastern Duars to Raha in Kamrup. There are inspection bungalows at the following places; Saralbhangha (11 miles), Garubhasa ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles) Sidli (6 miles), Papragaoon (9 miles), Bijni (8 miles), and Raha ($10\frac{3}{4}$ miles). An alternative route from Dhubri runs close to the Brahmaputra to Bilasipara, and thence, through Chapar and North Salmara, to Raha. There are inspection bungalows at the following places; Manipur ($17\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Bilasipara ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Chapar (17 miles), North Salmara (16 miles), and Raha ($17\frac{1}{2}$ miles). From Bilasipara a road runs north which presently divides into two branches. The western arm joins the trunk road a little to the west of Patgaon or Saralbhangha. The eastern branch meets it at Garubhasa. On the former there are inspection bungalows at Sasargaon (10 miles), and Datma (10 miles), on the latter at Kokrajhar (14 miles). Another road runs north from Jogighopa through North Salmara, till it meets the trunk road near the point at which it crosses the river Ai. Access to Bengal is given by two roads which take off, the one at Kachugaon, the other near

The roads
on the north
bank.

Pratapganj. There is an inspection bungalow on the former road at a point $19\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Kachugaon, and on the latter road at Agamani.

Roads south
of the Brah-
maputra.

South of the Brahmaputra a road runs from Manikchar, past Fakirganj opposite Dhubri, to Dhupdhara on the borders of Kamrup. There are inspection bungalows at Kharuyabadha, Patakata, and Fakirganj. East of Fakirganj the road is known as the south trunk road, and is supplied with inspection bungalows at the following stages, Langrabhita (9 miles), Lakhipur ($10\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Baida ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles) Agia ($10\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Krishnai ($8\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Rangjuli ($16\frac{3}{4}$ miles), and Dhupdhara (in Kamrup $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles) Goalpara town is connected with this trunk road, by roads that meet it at Agia, and at a point a little to the west of Krishnai. Another road runs from Damra to the Brahmaputra near Dalgoma. Minor roads to which no reference has been made are shown on the map appended to the Gazetteer. Altogether there were in the district in 1904, $159\frac{1}{2}$ miles of road kept up by the Public Works Department, and 356 miles maintained by the Local Boards. None of these roads are metalled, and they are thus liable to be much cut up if asked to carry heavy traffic in the rains. Many of the minor streams are spanned by good wooden bridges, but no less than 140 ferries are still maintained. Steam ferries ply across the Brahmaputra between Dhubri and Fakirganj and Goalpara and Jogighopa.

Post and
telegraph.

The following statement shows that there has been

a large development of postal business in Goalpara since 1871.

Number of post-offices in.		Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in.			Number of Savings Bank accounts in.		Balance at the credit of the depositors.	
1875-76	1903-04.	1881-82	1870-71.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04.
12	34	32	60	478	29	1,836	800	2 98,000

The Savings Bank has also made satisfactory progress and considering the low rate of interest allowed, the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures given for 1872 were returned after the bank had only been opened for a few months.

The mail is brought from Calcutta by the Eastern Bengal State Railway up to Dhubri, and is distributed, as a rule by runners, over the district. A list of the post and telegraph offices in Goalpara will be found in the appendix.

The principal articles exported from the district are timber, mustard seed, jute, hides, unhusked rice, fish, silk cloth, betel nuts, cotton, and lac. The last two articles come for the most part from the Garo Hills and only pass through Goalpara. The articles received in exchange are European piece goods, salt, hardware, oil, tobacco, gram and pulse, flour, sugar, molasses, spices, bell metal utensils, and umbrellas. The principal centres of trade are Goalpara, Gauripur, Dhubri,

Trade.

Manikarchar, Bilasipara, and Bagribari. Jute is also exported in considerable quantities from Patamari. Nearly all the wealthiest and most important merchants are Marwaris. The bulk of the export and import trade passes through their hands, and, in addition to this, they do a considerable retail business. In the larger marts there are shops kept by Muhammadans from Eastern Bengal, who sell grain, salt, oil, spices, lamps, cloths, stationery, and general haberdashery. Salt, oil, grain, umbrellas, and piece goods are the ordinary stock in trade of the village shopkeeper. The natives of the district have only succeeded in appropriating a comparatively small share of the retail trade, and the great majority of the shopkeepers are Marwaris, Bengalis, or Up-countrymen. A list of all towns or villages in which there are three or more permanent shops will be found in the appendix.

Markets and fairs.

Internal trade is largely carried on at markets, to which the villagers come with the produce of their farms. In the Eastern Duars this trade is generally carried on by barter. Boat loads of dried fish and earthen pots are brought up the rivers in the rains, and exchanged for unhusked rice. The rate of exchange is fixed by a panchayat. Dried fish fetches from twelve to twenty times its weight in paddy, and five or six seers of paddy are given for each pot. A list of the villages in which markets are held is appended to this volume. In addition to these markets there are a few fairs, held on the occasion of religious festivals. A list of these fairs is given below, but none of them are of

very much importance.

Name of place at which fair is held.	Pargana in which situated.	Date on which held.	Estimated number of people attending.
Chhatrasal ...	Ghurlla .	Middle of March ...	25,000
Dalgoma ..	Habraghat ...	End of January or beginning of February.	700 or 800
Dhubri ...	Jamira ...	Middle of April ...	5,000
Gauripur ...	Do. ...	Do. ...	3 000
Do. ...	Do. ...	Middle of July ...	3,000

The greater part of the total trade still enters and leaves the district by water, and much of it is carried by country boat. The rivers also take a very prominent part in the distribution of the internal trade of the district.

The transfrontier trade carried on with Bhutan is of very small importance, and the total annual value does not exceed six or seven thousand rupees. The principal import is rubber, the principal export silk.

The only three places in the district that are worthy of the name of town are Dhubri, Goalpara, and Gauripur. Dhubri is situated on the right bank of the Brahmaputra in $26^{\circ} 1' N.$ and $89^{\circ} 59' E.$, at the point where the river turns south to enter the plains of Bengal. The town is connected by rail with Calcutta, and is a port of call for the river steamers, while a steam ferry which plies on the Brahmaputra connects it with the trunk road that runs along the south bank of the river

Towns
Dhubri.

up to Saikhoa. It is thus favourably placed as regards communications, but the development of the town is hindered by the fact that it occupies a small spit of land, about one-third of a square mile in area, which suffers severely from the erosive action of the Brahmaputra. The population shows no tendency to increase, and was 2,893 in 1881; 4,825 in 1891; and 3,787 in 1901. The headquarters of the district were transferred from Goalpara to Dhubri in 1879. In addition to the usual public offices the town contains a small church, a jail which has accommodation for 34 persons, a high school, a public library, a town hall, and a marble statue of Queen Victoria. There is a considerable export trade in jute, but business is tending to leave the place for other centres, such as Bagribari and Gauripur, as merchants are unwilling to sink money in warehouses on ground which is liable to be carried away by the river.

Dhubri was constituted a municipality under Act V (B. C.) of 1876, and subsequently Act III (B. C.) of 1884 was extended to the town in 1901. There are ten municipal commissioners, six of whom are elected, two are nominated, and two are ex-officio members. The principal sources of income are a tax on holdings at the rate of $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of their annual value, a latrine rate, and the fees levied in the municipal market. Details will be found in Table XVII. There are nearly 7 miles of road within municipal limits, $2\frac{1}{2}$ of which are metalled. Drinking water is obtained from the Brahmaputra, and from three public and ten private wells. The

town is well lighted and in spite of its small size has no less than 52 lamps.

Goalpara is the largest town in the district, and is situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in 26°10' N. and 90°38' E. Prior to 1879 it was the headquarters of the district, and since the transfer the population of the town has shown no tendency to increase. The figures recorded at the three last enumerations were ; 1881, 6,697 ; 1891, 5,440 ; 1901, 6,287.

In addition to the magistrate's court, the public buildings include a small jail, a high school, a hospital with eighteen beds, post and telegraph offices, a police station, and a circuit house. Nearly all of these buildings are situated on a hill, whose summit is 400 feet above the level of the sea. This hill is surrounded on two sides by the Brahmaputra, and commands a fine view across the valley of that river, which at this point is much broken up by outlying ranges of hills. The native town is situated on the plain to the west of the hill, and, after the earthquake of 1897, sank below flood level. Embankments, fitted with sluice gates, have recently been erected, which protect the town from the floods of the Brahmaputra. The lower parts are, however, waterlogged by accumulations of rain water, which cannot be drained off till the river falls, and the shops and houses present a somewhat dilapidated appearance.

Goalpara was constituted a municipality under Act V (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878. There are nine municipal commissioners, eight of whom are elected by the rate payers. From Table XVII it will be seen that about

one-third of the municipal income was derived from a tax on persons, but the total income in 1900-01 was less than Rs. 7,000. The town covers an area of $1\frac{1}{2}$ square miles, and is served by $2\frac{1}{4}$ miles of metalled and $10\frac{1}{4}$ miles of unmetalled road. Drinking water is obtained from the Brahmaputra, from three tanks, six masonry wells, and a large number of private water holes.

Gauripur. Gauripur is a flourishing little town on the right bank of the Gadadhar river about five miles north of Dhubri. The zamindar of the Gauripur estate has a fine house here, and there is a high school, a dispensary, and a post and telegraph office. There is a considerable settlement of Marwari merchants, who do a large trade in jute, mustard seed, and piece goods, and there are blacksmiths, wheelwrights, potters, goldsmiths, confectioners, and the full complement of shopkeepers and artisans found in a small Indian town. There is also a large daily bazar where the ordinary products of the country can be obtained. The wants of the outer as well as of the inner man are not forgotten, and there are fifteen or sixteen sewing machines in the bazar which are diligently used for the manufacture of cheap clothing.

Local Boards In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a

committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large and in 1875-76, the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is chairman of the board of the head quarters subdivision; the Goalpara board is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all local roads within their jurisdiction, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial funds. The principal

heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVI. The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. Estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue. The permanently settled estates—History of the great Zamindaries—The Eastern Duars—Land revenue collection—Town lands—Excise—Opium—Country spirit—Laopani—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Police—Jails—Education—Medical—Vital statistics—Surveys.

For the purposes of land revenue administration ^{Land} Goalpara consists of two distinct tracts, (1) the area ^{revenue: the permanently settled estates.} covered by the jurisdiction of the three thanas of Goalpara, Dhubri, and Karaibari, as that jurisdiction stood in 1822; and (2) the Eastern Duars, which are situated in the north of the district and were annexed in 1864, after the failure of Mr. Eden's Mission to Bhutan.

The history of the permanently settled estates is closely bound up with the history of the district, and of the great families of landlords. After the downfall

of the Koch kingdom and the withdrawal of Mir Jumla from Assam in 1663 A. D., the Manas was fixed as the eastern limit of the Musalman dominions. The greater part of Goalpara seems to have been originally held at a low rate of tribute by the descendants of the Koch king, Parikshit, and, though they were no longer in theory independent princes, the Koch zamindars must have been princes in almost everything but name. Might, however, was largely right in a frontier district in those troublous times, and various other chieftains succeeded in securing broad tracts of territory for themselves.

A very light assessment was imposed upon these zamindars. They were lords of the marches, and from people of that class it has never been the practice in any age to require heavy contributions towards the exchequer of the central government. The assessment on the Bijni estate was originally fixed at Rs. 5,998, which was afterwards commuted to an annual contribution of 68 elephants. The zamindars of Karaihari, Kalumalupara, and Ghurla similarly paid their dues in cotton.* When the British acquired the *dewani* of the district, this tribute was accepted as land revenue. No settlement in detail was ever made, and it is doubtful whether Goalpara was included in the great decennial settlement which was made permanent in 1793. Government has not, however, thought fit to dispute the title of the zamindars.

* Vide Mills' Report on Assam and a note by Mr. Forbes in 1875, of which an abstract has been given in a paper by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., on the Koch Kings of Kamrupa, in J. A. S. B., Vol. LXII, part 1, No. 4. 1893.

The following statement gives details with regard to the various permanently settled estates :—

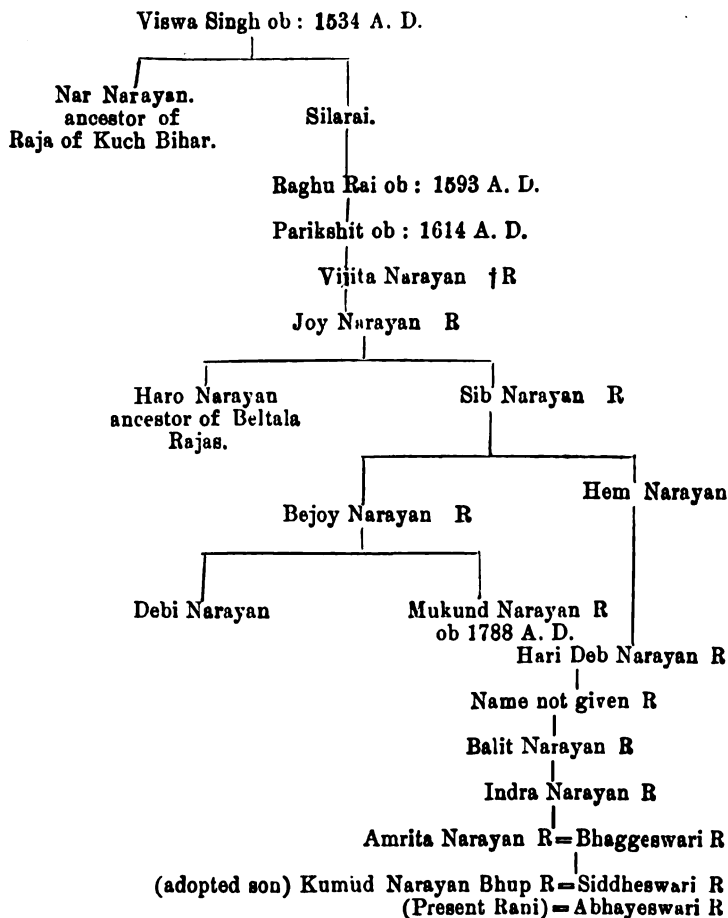
Details of
Estates.

Name of Proprietor.	Name of Estate.	Area in sq. miles.	Estimated cultivated area in acres.	Revenue demand.
				Rs. A. P.
Bijni Rani ..	Habraghat and Khuntaghat	942.63	102,478	2,355-1 0
Gauripur Raja ...	Ghuria, Jamira, Makrampur, and Aurangabad	423.54	147,006	3,299-11-0
	Kalumalupara ..	54.98	17,787	1,706-11-0
	Gola Alamganj ..	13.24	569	21-6-0
	Kayarpar ..	...	11	13-8-0
	Noabad Faturi ..	2.69	1,431	11-12-0
	Dhubri ..	..	...	25 10-0
	Total ..	494.45	166,804	5,078-10-0
Mechpara Zamindars ..	Mechpara ..	399.21	37,163	2,151-5-10-0
	Taluk Goalpara ..	..	1,680	59-14-0
	Dekhhoa ..	...	73	25-0-0
	Dhar Brahmaputra ..	...	118	45-0-0
	Total ..	399.21	39,034	2,235-8-0
Chapar Zamindar ...	Chapar Kashba Gila ..	201.49	11,248	608-13-0
	Kajipara ..	..	442	22-6-0
	Total ..	201.49	11,690	630-3-0
Parbatjoar Zamindars ..	Parbatjoar ..	275.89	18,962	547-10-0
Karailbari Zamindars ...	Karailbari 12 annas share ..	50.84	13,246	...
	Do. 4 annas share ..	...	1,971	...
	Total ..	50.84	15,217	...
Gauripur and Parbatjoar Zamindars ..	Taria ..	19.11	9,671	98-7-0
	Settled invalid Lakhiraj Uchita, etc. ..	..	2,986	447 8-0
	Resumed Lakhiraj Khalisha Kuri, etc. ..	..	40	21-15-0
	Total ..	19.11	12,677	567-9 0
	Grand Total ..	3,383.63	366,762	11,410-9-0

* The compensation paid by Government on account of loss of market dues exceeds the land revenue assessed.

There are altogether 19 permanently settled estates covering an area of 2,384 square miles, which are distributed amongst six families of landlords. By far the largest area is held by the Bijni family, and when the district is more densely peopled this estate will become extremely valuable. At the present moment the Gauripur Raja has a larger rent-roll. The total land revenue demand on these estates is Rs. 11,411, or less than half a farthing per acre. Government, moreover, pays the zamindars Rs. 8,556 as compensation for the abolition of market dues and other illegal cesses, so that the net revenue is only Rs. 2,855 or a little more than a rupee per square mile. Local rates are, however, assessed at the rate of two annas for every acre under cultivation, and at the rate of one anna in the rupee on the actual profits, if any, obtained from land that is lying waste. Included in the area of 2,384 square miles of permanently settled land there are 40 estates, covering an area of 99,055 acres, which are held free of revenue.

The following table shows that the Bijni family is ^{The Bijni family.} descended from the great Koch king, Viswa Singh, who died in 1534 A.D.; though failure of heirs has more than once prevented the direct transmission of the blood.*



N.B.—The letter R signifies Raja or Rani of Bijni.

* The accounts of the Goalpara Zamindars have been condensed from reports received from their representatives.

† So Mr. Gait in the Koch Kings of Kamarupa. Indra Narayan places Chandra Narayan between Parikshit and Joy Narayan.

**History of
the estate.**

The history of the Bijni family is the history of a line, which gradually declined from the proud position of a powerful sovereign prince, to the comfortable, though less dignified status of a wealthy zamindar. The fortunes of the Koch kings down to the time of Parikshit have already been described. Parikshit's son, Vijita, is said to have been an infant at the time of his father's death, and during his minority the Ahom king took possession of Kamrup. A large tract of country in the western division of Raghu Rai's old kingdom, was conferred by the Emperor on one Kabi Shekhar Barua, the founder of the Gauripur family, and Vijita thus obtained but a portion of the inheritance of his forefathers. Sib Narayan, the second in descent from Vijita added, however, to the family estates by seizing the Bijni Duar, which he appears to have held at a low quit rent from the Raja of Bhutan. About the middle of the eighteenth century, during the minority of Debi Narayan and Mukund Narayan, Mechpara and Chapar were formed into separate zamindaries, and the Bijni estates assumed their present form. Amrita Narayan left no heir, and was succeeded by his wife Bhaggeswari, who adopted Kumud Narayan Bhup. He too died childless, and was succeeded by his two wives. The elder Rani died in 1891, and the younger wife is the present Rani of Bijni.

**Area and
resources of
estate.**

The Bijni estate consists of the two parganas of Habraghat and Khuntaghat, which cover an area of 943 square miles and are permanently settled for the

peppercorn revenue of Rs. 2,355.* It has already been explained that the revenue was originally fixed at Rs. 5,998, and that it was subsequently commuted to a contribution of 68 elephants. Great difficulty was, however, experienced in realizing the total number of elephants due, and, in 1788, this payment in kind was commuted to a small cash revenue. Habraghat consists of that portion of the district which lies south of the Brahmaputra and east of Goalpara town, Khuntaghat lies north of the river, and is bounded on the east by the Manas, on the north by Bijni Duar, and on the west by Parbatjoar. The Bijni Raja has also certain claims to 203 square miles in the Bijni Duar, on which there is at present assessed a revenue of Rs. 27,383. The local rates assessed on Habraghat and Khuntaghat are eight times the land revenue, and amount to Rs. 18,970; while in the Bijni Duar they are only Rs. 2,189. The rent roll of the former estate is said to be approximately Rs. 1,35,000, and of the latter Rs. 39,300. The rent roll thus exceeds the Government demand on account of land revenue and cesses by at least $1\frac{1}{4}$ lakhs of rupees. The Bijni Raja does not, however, depend entirely on his rent roll for his income, and he obtains considerable sums from his forests and fisheries, and from the thatching grass, grazing, markets, potters earth, and lac mahals. The rajbari is situated at Abhayapuri about three miles from North Salmara.

In comparison with Bijni, the Chapar zamindari is Chapar Zamindari. a comparatively small estate. It is situated in parganas

* Certain lakhiraj estates in these parganas are, however, held by the Gauripur zamindar.

Chapar and Kasba Gilla, and covers rather more than 200 square miles. The greater part of pargana Chapar consists of *chur* land lying on either side of the Brahmaputra, and only a small portion of the total area of the zamindari is at present under cultivation. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 626-3 and the local rates Rs. 1,638. The total rent roll of the estate is said to be between twenty-five and thirty thousand rupees, and, in addition to this, the zamindars derive a certain amount of profit from their fisheries and forests. The Chapar family are descended from a Rarhi Brahman, named Joy Narayan Sarma, who was a native of the Kishorganj subdivision of Mymensingh. This man obtained a grant of the estates from the Mughals, and the present zamindar, Babu Indra Narayan Chaudhury, is the eighth in succession to him. He was, however, only the adopted son of his predecessor. The family home is situated at Bilasipara.

**The
Gauripur
family.**

The Gauripur family is said to be descended from a Kayastha, who migrated from Tirhoot to Goalpara about the beginning of the sixteenth century A.D. The first member of the family of whom anything definite is known, was Kabi Sekhar, who succeeded his father in 1658, A.D. He seems to have been a man of some intelligence and enterprise, and was made *Dewan* by the Mughal Emperor. In this capacity he gave satisfaction to his royal master, and he subsequently received the title of Raja and a *lakhiraj* grant of 70,000 *bighas* of land. For three generations after Kabi Sekhar, father was followed by son, but, though the post of Kanungo was held by all, they do not appear to have distinguished

themselves in any way. Boal Chandra Barua, who succeeded to the headship of the family in 1778, acquired the zamindari of the five parganas of Ghurla, Aurungabad, Makrampur, Jamira, and Gola Alamganj. This in itself was a magnificent estate, but it was still further enlarged by Boal's grandson, Dhir Chandra Barua, who purchased parganas Kalumalupara, Noabad Faturi, and Dhubri, and a share in the Taria pargana. Dhir Chandra's son, Pratap Chandra Barua, did good service in the Bhutan war, and was made a Rai Bahadur in 1867. He made further additions to the estate, and in 1869 generously made over to Government the greater portion of pargana Dhubri when it was proposed to transfer the head quarters of the district to that place. He died without heirs in 1880, and the present zamindar, Kumar Prabhat Chandra Barua, was adopted by his widow. This young man attained his majority in 1896, and received the title of Raja as a personal distinction in 1901. The present Raja is a liberal and enlightened landlord. He has founded an excellent public library at Dhubri, and maintains a high school and dispensary at Gauripur, and a dispensary at Agamani.

The Gauripur estate lies in the western portion of the district. It includes the seven entire parganas of Ghurla, Jamira, Makrampur, Gola Alamganj, Noabad Faturi, Kalumalupara, and Aurungabad, with part of Taria, and certain *lakhiraj* estates in parganas Habraghat and Khuntaghat. The total area is about 55 square miles, which pays to Government Rs. 5,299 as land revenue, and Rs. 25,337 as local rates. The rent roll is

Area and
resources of
estate

said to amount to Rs. 2,34,000, and the miscellaneous revenue derived from forests and other sources to nearly Rs. 32,000 per annum. About two thirds of the estate is already under cultivation, but upwards of 160 square miles are still lying waste.

**The
Karaibari
zamindars.**

The present zamindars of Karaibari obtained their estates in 1809 A. D., when the zamindaris of that turbulent frontier chieftain, Mahendra Narayan, were attached for arrears of revenue and sold. The auction purchaser was one Rama Nath Lahiri, prime minister of Kuch Bihar, and it is from him that the present holders take their title.

The estates cover an area of 51 square miles, and pay a land revenue of Rs. 3,267. It is hardly, however, correct to say that any land revenue is paid, as Government makes an annual grant to the zamindars of Rs. 3,868, as compensation for the abolition of market dues, and the estate is thus a positive charge upon the general revenues of the country. The local rates at present (1904) assessed amount to Rs. 2,105. The estate has been partitioned into a twelve anna and a four anna share. The owners, who are a Brahman family, do not reside in the Goalpara district.

**The
Mechpara
estate.**

The Mechpara estate covers an area of 399 square miles, and is situated in the Mechpara pargana. This pargana occupies the strip of country lying between the Brahmaputra and the Garo Hills, and is roughly bounded on the east and west by lines drawn south from Goalpara and Dhubri towns. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 2,235-8 and the local rates Rs. 5,557-8. The total

rent roll is said to be about Rs. 1,30,000, and, in addition to this, the landlords derive a considerable income from their sal forests. The seat of the family is at Lakhipur.

The Parbatjoar estate covers an area of 276 square miles, and is situated in the pargana of that name, which lies north of the Brahmaputra and west of Khuntaghat. The land revenue assessed is Rs. 547-10, the local rates Rs. 8,579-7, and the income from the estate, including the profits derived from fisheries and timber, is said to amount to nearly Rs. 1,50,000. As the area of land at present under cultivation is said to be only about 21,000 acres, the rent-roll is presumably responsible for less than half the total income of the zamindars. The family is said to be descended from one Hatibar Chaudhury who received a grant of the estate twelve generations ago. An eight anna share is at present held by Babu Surendra Narayan Singh Chaudhury whose residence is at Bagribari, a five anna share is held by Srimoti Bimola Sundari Chaudurani who lives at Rupsi, and a three anna share by Srimoti Susila Sundari Chaudurani whose home is in Calcutta.

The Sidli Raja is not in possession of any permanently settled estates, but at the time of the annexation of the Bhutan Duars, he laid claim to the Duar from which he takes his name.

According to the family traditions the founder of the line was a Kshattriya named Chikna Narayan, who was adopted by a certain Raja of Sidli, named Bhim Singh. The descendants of this man were in the habit of paying tribute, first to the Mughal Emperor, and afterwards to the Hon'ble East India Company. About 1784, the

Bhutias seemed to have succeeded in imposing their suzerainty upon the Sidli Rajas, and continued to receive tribute from them till the outbreak of the Bhutan war. On the conclusion of that war the Duars were annexed by the British. The arrangements that were made for the satisfaction of the Sidli Raja's claims, are described in the following paragraphs.

**The Eastern
Duars.**

The Eastern Duars are five in number, and are situated in the following order going from east to west,—Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, Ripu, and Guma which lies south of Ripu. When the Duars were annexed by the British in 1864, the Bijni Raja laid claim to the Bijni Duar, on the ground that he had occupied the position of hereditary proprietor of this estate under the Bhutan Government. Similar claims were put forward to the whole of the Sidli Duar by the Sidli Raja. After a careful enquiry had been made into the validity of these claims, the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir William Grey, stated that he had no doubt that the Rajas of Sidli and Bijni had for many generations held that sort of position and enjoyed those rights and privileges which must be recognised as giving them the status of hereditary zamindars. He accordingly declared that they were entitled as zamindars to a settlement of the estates which they had managed and possessed under the Bhutan Government.* Settlement for a period of seven years was, accordingly, made in 1870 with the Sidli Raja, and with the Court of Wards on behalf of the minor Raja of Bijni. The Sidli Raja proved to be negligent and incapable, and after the first year the management

* Vide letter from Bengal Government No. 3594, dated 20th September 1867.

of the Duar was resumed by Government, 20 per cent. of the collections being allowed to him as *malikana*. On the expiry of this settlement the question was raised as to the area which could reasonably be considered to form the acknowledged estates of the two Rajas.

In 1882, the Government of India decided that 130,000 acres should be assigned to the Raja of Bijni and 170,000 acres to the Sidli Raja. In 1885, settlement was offered to the two zamindars for ten years at 80 per cent. of the rental for 1885-86, but the offer was refused. The Duars, accordingly, continued under Government management, the Sidli Raja receiving 20 per cent. and the Bijni Raja $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the collections. In 1900, settlement was again offered, and on this occasion was accepted by both of the families concerned, but before the lease could be executed the Sidli Raja died. His successor did not wish to undertake the responsibilities of management, and the original arrangement under which Government remained in charge of the estate and paid 20 per cent. of the collections to the zamindar was allowed to continue. In April 1903, a lease for ten years expiring on March 31st 1911, was issued to the Bijni Rani for her estates in the Bijni Duar. The lessor is required to pay 80 per cent. of the revenue demand of 1900-1901, and is allowed to appropriate any profits that may accrue from extension of cultivation during the term of the lease, but no rebate will be allowed, merely because the rent roll happens to decline. The levy of all *abwabs* or other cesses, and of all transit dues is forbidden, but the landlord has the right of enhancement of rent

according to the provisions of the rent law. The population is, however, so sparse that it is doubtful whether much enhancement would be possible.

**Settlement
of the Duars.**

The first settlement of the Eastern Duars was made by Mr. Beckett in 1872. The rates assessed were very moderate. In Bijni, Sidli, Chirang, and Ripu, they were only Re. 1-8-0 per acre of homestead or transplanted rice land, and 12 annas an acre for all other kinds of land. In Guma, they were even lower, and were Re. 1, per acre for the former, and Annas 8 per acre for the latter class of land.

The Ripu Duar was settled with the Chapar zamindar, and Chirang with the zamindar of Gauripur, but, when the leases ran out, they were not renewed, and settlement was made, as in Assam Proper, direct with the actual cultivators. In 1893, the rates in the portion of Guma, which lies west of the forest reserves and is inhabited by Rajbansis, were raised to Rs. 3 per acre for homestead, Rs. 1-14 per acre for land growing transplanted rice, and Re. 1-8 per acre for land under other crops. Elsewhere the rates assessed are the same as those imposed in 1872. The following statement shows the settled area of each Duar in that year and in 1903-04 :—

Duar.	Settled Area.		Total Area.	Population 1901.
	1872.	1903-04.		
	acres.	acres.	Acres.	
Bijni	23,003	25,851	239,482	25,850
Sidli	20,982	33,542	230,790	31,509
Chirang	933	817	316,890	1,081
Ripu	2,184	1,956	154,893	2,425
Guma	4,181	10,849	62,694	11,198
Total	51,243	73,015	1,004,749	72,072

The Duars are a very unprogressive portion of the district. The great mass of the population are Meches, who are still in a very primitive and undeveloped state, communications, except for the rivers, are bad, there are hardly any markets, and not much trade except in timber from the Government reserves. The surplus produce of the Duars is bartered with merchants who come up the rivers with boat loads of pottery and dried fish, and the rate of exchange is generally very favourable to the trader. The rates of revenue as compared with Assam Proper are distinctly low, but, in view of the backward condition of the people and the country, Government has taken no steps for their enhancement.

For the purpose of the collection of the land revenue Land revenue collection. the Duars which are still under the direct management of Government, are divided into five mauzas. Chirang and Ripu and Guma form two mauzas. Sidli is divided into three. Nearly four-fifths of the settled area has been cadastrally surveyed, and the maintenance of the land records is entrusted to a staff of 33 mandals under two supervisor kanungoes and a sub-deputy collector.

The town of Dhubri originally covered an area of Town lands. 875 *bighas* distributed as follows. A portion of the permanently settled estates of the Gauripur zamindar, generously surrendered to Government in 1869, 197 *bighas*; a resumed *lakhiraj* estate, 604 *bighas*; a portion of Bidyapara *lakhiraj* estate, 60 *bighas*; three other small *lakhiraj* estates 5 *bighas*; portion reserved by

the Gauripur zamindar 8 *bighas*. About one-fourth of this area has, however, been removed by the erosive action of the river. The town was settled for a period of thirty years with effect from April 1899. The rates assessed per acre vary from Rs. 21, rising to Rs. 30 in the eleventh year, to Rs. 9. Practically the whole of the land suitable for trade sites was settled *en bloc* with the Municipality for ten years in 1895. The area of this land is about 30 *bighas*, the revenue assessed Rs. 5 per *bigha*. The Municipality have spent a large sum in improving the site, and have sublet the land for Rs. 20 per *bigha* with a premium of Rs. 500 per *bigha*. A large portion of the land was, however, reserved for the municipal market. Under the rules now in force waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual letting value of the site. The lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner think fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder.

Excise.

Table XII shows the receipts obtained in the district in 1890-91, and in 1900-01 and subsequent years from the various heads of excise. The inhabitants of the district are unusually temperate. They consume very little opium or ganja, and are fairly moderate in the use of country spirit.* How marked is the difference between the eastern and western end of the Assam Valley can be judged from the fact that, though the population

*The contrast between this marked temperance, and the extraordinary prevalence of insanity is note-worthy.

of Lakhimpur in 1901 was only about four-fifths of that of Goalpara, the excise revenue of Lakhimpur in 1903-04 was more than eight times as great. The principal cause of this remarkable difference is the enormous quantity of opium consumed in Lakhimpur.

Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular mahal was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74, there were in the district 250 shops for the retail vend of opium; thirty years later there were only 24.

The figures in the margin show that there has been

	Maunds.	an extraordinary decrease in
1873-74 ...	84	
1879-80 ...	29	the quantity of opium con-
1889-90 ...	22	sumed in the district. At the
1899-1900 ...	8	

present day the amount is insignificant, but at no time was the drug really popular in Goalpara. In 1873-74, the number of maunds consumed was not much more than one fifth of the number in Lakhimpur, though the latter district had not one third of the population of Goalpara. The reduction in the number of retail shops and the imposition of a heavy duty, seem to have succeeded in almost killing out a habit which had never taken a firm hold upon the people. Opium is not a popular drug in North Eastern Bengal, of which Goalpara really forms a part, and in 1901-02 only 8 maunds were issued in the neighbouring district of Jalpaiguri, and 52 maunds in Rangpur.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills, or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made from opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed.

Country
Spirit
The still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of

vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large Material employed. proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed—mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers, or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers, or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an

hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul*, if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

The statement in the margin shows that there has been a considerable increase in the revenue derived from country spirits. The system of auctioning the shops renders it impossible for Government to obtain its fair share

	No. of shops.	Revenue Rs.
1873-74	... 4	... 120
1879 80	... 12	... 4,060
1889-90	... 21	... 17,151
1899-1900	... 28	... 26,089

of the profits of the trade, in the absence of healthy competition at the sales; and it is to an improvement in this direction more than to anything else that the increase of revenue is due. There does not appear to be any reason for supposing that there has been any material increase of drunkenness amongst the people.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth

Laopani.

is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth. No attempt is made to restrict the manufacture of rice beer in moderate quantities for home use, as any attempt to do so would certainly lead to corruption and oppression. In a matter of this kind the influence of the Hindu gosains, and the pressure of local village opinion has more effect than any direct action of the Government.

Ganja. Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Assam, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage.

Income Tax. The receipts under the head of income tax in 1903-04 amounted to Rs. 25,566, nearly nine-tenths of which were obtained from the head, 'Other sources of income.' About one-half of this total was derived from estates taxable under the Act, an item which does not appear in any other district in the Province except Sylhet. These estates are various sources of miscellaneous revenue enjoyed by the zamindars, such as market tolls, receipts from timber yards, and income derived from forest produce. The bulk of the remainder was derived from 149 dealers in general goods, 36 money lenders, 26 dealers in provisions, and 13 pleaders. The receipts

under the head of income tax do not show much tendency to increase. In 1888, they amounted to Rs. 28,700, but by 1894 they had fallen to Rs. 19,700. From 1896 onwards there was an upward tendency, which reached the highest point in 1902-03, with Rs. 32,100. The decrease in the following year was due to the exemption of incomes between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 per annum from taxation.

In 1903-04, the receipts under or the head of judicial stamps in Goalpara amounted to Rs. 37,167 and for non-judicial stamps to Rs. 14,993. These figures were exceeded by every district in the plains except Darrang and Nowgong. Stamps.

Public Works are in charge of an Executive or Assistant Engineer who is usually assisted by one upper and six lower subordinates. Public Works.

The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and telegraph offices at district and sub-divisional head-quarters, circuit houses, dak bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads.

The most important roads directly under the department are the trunk road along the south bank of the Brahmaputra from the Kamrup border to Fakirganj opposite Dhubri, with its continuation to Manikarchar; and the road from Dhubri to Kachugaon.

It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering

knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the Department has to contend are the absence of an artisan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour.

Government. For general administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions. Dhubri is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, and Goalpara is entrusted to an assistant magistrate who is usually a native of the country. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed two subordinate magistrates and a sub-deputy collector as his assistants at Dhubri.

Criminal and civil justice. Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner, from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley districts, whose head-quarters are at Gauhati. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. In 1902, there were four stipendiary magistrates in the district, who decided 717 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 2,227 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 852 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is not much serious crime in Goalpara, and most of the offences were either house-breaking and house-trespass or petty thefts.

The civil work of the district is not heavy and the Deputy Commissioner acts as subordinate judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision acts

as munsif. In 1902, the subordinate judge heard 9 original cases and 18 appeals, while 1,229 cases were disposed of by the munsifs. Only a little over one-seventh of these cases were contested, and a large proportion of them were simple money suits. In spite of the fact that the greater part of the district is permanently settled the number of rent and title suits is very small. Special rules are in force for the administration of civil justice in the Eastern Duars. The Code of Civil Procedure is not in force. The rules are fit for the simple and primitive people inhabiting the tract, and provide that, unless one or other of the parties objects, civil suits should be disposed of by a village panchayat. The panchayats are chosen by the parties to the case, and the proceedings of the panchayat when endorsed by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants are final. When the parties refuse to refer their suit to the panchayat the case is tried by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants. No appeal lies as a matter of right from the decision of the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants, but the Commissioner of the Assam Valley districts or the Deputy Commissioner may, if he sees fit, upon application of the parties, call for and revise the proceedings of the lower court.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the Registrar of **Registration**. the district, and an assistant magistrate in each sub-division acts as sub-registrar. A rural sub-registrar's office was established at Gauripur in 1902. The number of documents registered in 1903 was only 2,174, but even this moderate figure was not equalled or exceeded by any district in the Assam Valley.

Police.

The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 2 inspectors, 25 sub-inspectors, and 243 constables. 113 smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Goalpara, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional head-quarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. The foundation of the police system is the village chaukidar. He is required to report all serious crime to the officer in charge of the police station within which his village is situated, to arrest persons committing such crimes in his presence, to collect vital statistics, to observe the movements of bad characters, and generally to inform his official superiors of anything likely to affect the peace and good administration of the district. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrent cases.

A list of the thanas and outposts with the strength maintained in each will be found in Table XIX.

Jails.

There is a subsidiary jail at Dhubri with accommodation for 24 convicts, and a magistrates lock-up at Goalpara. The industries carried on in these jails are

mustard oil pressing and bamboo and cane work at Dhubri, and oil pressing at Goalpara. The jail gardens also afford occupation to the prisoners. Most of the convicts were originally employed on extra-mural labour, but this form of occupation has been to a great extent abandoned as it was hardly compatible with the strict enforcement of discipline. Prisoners are not kept in these small jails for more than three months, and those sentenced to a longer term are transferred to Gauhati. Mr. McCosh, who was civil surgeon of Goalpara in 1835, states that at that time the convicts were allowed to provide their own rations, receiving a small allowance for the purpose, from which the more thrifty were able to save money which they lent out on usury. "Many of the prisoners" he says "lead rather a happy life, and considered themselves as Company's servants. They take as much pains to burnish their irons as they would a bracelet, and would not choose to escape though they had an opportunity."

In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College Education. described the state of education in the valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that, unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial schools had only recently been introduced in Assam. In 1847-48, there was one secondary and 9 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress as on the occasion of Mr. Mills' visit in 1853 there were only 10 schools of

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

all grades. 1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXI.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	No of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	15	580	89	1,840	2,420	160	8.15	0.97
1880-81	10	535	96	2,387	2,922	153	13.23	0.78
1890-91	16	894	178	4,037	4,931	92	18.69	1.33
1900-01	19	1,401	230	5,827	7,228	64		

High Schools.

High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed.

There are four high schools in the district which are situated at Dhubri, Goalpara, Abhayapuri and Gauripur. The first is a Government school but more than half the total expenditure is met from fees. The second receives

a grant in aid, and the two last are respectively maintained by the Rani of Bijni and the Gauripur Raja.

There are middle English schools at Bilasipara, Bagribari, Manikarchar, and Dalgoma. The middle vernacular schools are situated at Sukchar, Patamari, Chhatrasal, South Salmara, Bijni, Atugaon, Putimari, Amguri, Goalpara, and Dhubri. Almost all the pupils in the middle vernacular schools in 1903-04 were, however, reading in the primary classes and for practical purposes they are little more than superior primary schools.

**Middle
Schools.**

The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course:—(1) Bengali comprising literature, grammar and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), Mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, (6) Botany and Agriculture.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is only nine per cent. of the total number. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made

**Primary
Education.**

to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes.

Medical. The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Dhubri. It contains 14 dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He also acts as Embarkation Agent, as Medical officer of the Jail, and controls and inspects the vaccination department.

**Lack of
sanitation in
rural areas.**

It has already been suggested in the chapter on population that there may be something in the climate, the subsoil level of the water, or some other factor which for the present remains obscure, which is prejudicial to life and health, but there can be no doubt that the conditions under which the people pass their days are not conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from chills, which might

have been prevented by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses of the Hindus and Muhammadans are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. There are a few wells constructed by the Local Board in the large villages, but their number is small in proportion to the total population, and drinking water is usually drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital occurrences are reported by the village chaukidars in writing to the police, and the statistics, ^{Vital statistics.} though admittedly incomplete, are less inaccurate than those returned from other districts of the Province. The reported birth rate and death rate worked out on the mean population between 1891 and 1900 were alike 39 per mille. In 1903, the recorded birth rate was 43, the death rate 33 per mille.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which ^{Causes of mortality. Cholera and small pox.} death most often takes in the Goalpara district, at any rate according to the official returns, but so little

reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examination. Most fatal illnesses are accompanied by a rise in temperature and the villagers are in consequence very prone to ascribe every death to fever. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death

		Cholera death rate per mille.
1884	...	4.9
1886	...	4.9
1891	...	6.4
1895	...	6.7
1897	...	10.4
1899	...	5.1

rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. Cholera usually appears in the police stations of Bilasipara, Chapaguri, and Agamani. The bacillus, thrives

in the muddy banks of tanks and rivers, when they are warmed by the sun and moistened by the showers of spring. The disease is thus most prevalent between April and July, and again in November and December when the water is drying up. On the outbreak of an epidemic a hospital assistant is sent to the affected villages, and cholera pills are distributed amongst the people, but it is difficult to do much for their relief. Small pox also appears from time to time in a virulent form. The highest death rates per mille recorded from this cause during recent years were 6.1 in 1894 and 1.2 in 1895. The people appreciate the advantages of vaccination, and during the five years ending with 1901-02, 44 per mille of the population were annually protected.

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901.

“When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the province, it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90, a specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called *beri-beri* of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and *beri-beri* were merely different names for *anchylostomiasis*, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the *dochmius duodenalis* a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy ; but the support which was given to Dr. Giles’ views by local medical opinion was withdrawn when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that *anchylostoma* were present in varying numbers in no less than 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that, whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of *anchylostomiasis* that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which could be communicated from the sick to the healthy, an opinion which was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that, whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not *anchylostomiasis*. The suggestion that malaria could be commu-

licated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898 "—Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world." A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever."

Externally the chief point of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lies in the rapidity with which the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy. Recent investigations have, however, thrown some doubt on the malarial theory. Certain parasites called Leishman-Donovan bodies have been discovered in the spleens of fever patients, and it is thought possible that they may be the cause of the complaint. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture. *Kala-azar* first entered Goalpara in 1883, and produced such a rise in the recorded mortality that a special establishment was entertained to move about through the affected villages and administer medical relief. The disease was most prevalent south of the Brahmaputra, and, between 1881 and 1891, the population of the Goal-

para subdivision, which includes this tract, decreased by no less than 18 per cent. It gradually burned itself out, and since 1901 the mortality from this cause has not been high.

Dysentery, diarrhœa, and other bowel complaints are also common, especially at the time when the mangoes and jack fruit ripen. Many persons suffer from worms and cutaneous disorders, and venereal diseases unfortunately seem fairly prevalent. Cases of goitre are for the most part confined to the western portion of the district. The fevers of Goalpara are generally of an intermittent type, accompanied by headache, constipation, and nausea. The spleen and liver are congested, and, after several attacks, the former organ becomes enlarged. The Eastern Duars have always been considered to be extremely unhealthy for all persons except the indigenous inhabitants, and fever is also common in the Chapaguri, Lakhipur, and Dudhnai thanas and in part of Pratapganj.

There are very few professional midwives, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrificed, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman, or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of

medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patients bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. If the labour is a natural one all is well, but if complications arise the case has usually a fatal termination. It is also probable that many lives are lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.

Increase in
facilities for
obtaining
medical aid.

There can be little doubt that many lives are still annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment. But it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the following abstract it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 12 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 135 to 1,082.

Year.	No. of dispensaries	No. of patients treated.	No. of operations performed.
1881	4	5,474	135
1891	9	22,101	526
1901 (a)	18	63,747	1,072

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Dhubri, Gauripur, Manikarohar, and Goalpara, each of which

(a) Exclusive of the private dispensary at Abhayapuri.

had, in 1903, a daily average attendance ranging from 41 to 71. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, diseases of the eye, dysentery and diarrhoea, and rheumatic affections. The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXIV.

A professional revenue survey of Goalpara was made **surveys.** at the time when the district formed a part of Bengal, and maps were published in 1876. They are on the scale of one inch to the mile and in addition to topographical features, show the sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of 4 miles to the inch was published in 1883 and brought up to date in 1893. A cadastral survey was carried out in the Eastern Duars, by local agency on the basis of a traverse by the professional survey party. The total area so surveyed between 1st October 1896 to September 30th, 1900 was 338 square miles.



APPENDIX.

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STATEMENT A.

List of Post and Telegraph Offices.

Name of post office.	Police station or outpost in which situated.	Pargana in which situated.
Abhayapuri ...	North Salmara ...	Khuntaghat.
Agamani ...	Agamani ...	Ghurlla.
Agia ...	Goalpara ...	Mechpara.
Bagribari* ...	Bilasipara ...	Parbatjoar.
Baitamari ...	North Salmara ...	Khuntaghat.
Bijni ...	Chapaguri ...	Duar Bijni.
Bilasipara* ...	Bilasipara ...	Chapar.
Chapaguri ...	Chapaguri ...	Duar Bijni.
Chapar ...	Bilasipara ...	Chapar.
Dalgoma ...	Goalpara ...	Habraghat.
Damra ...	Dudhnai ...	Do.
Darangiri ...	Do. ...	Do.
Dhubri ..	Dhubri ...	Jamira (Dhubri town.)
Fakirganj ...	South Salmara ...	Do.
Fakiragram ...	Bilasipara ...	Khuntaghat.
Garubhara ...	Chapaguri ...	Duar Sidli.
Gauripur* ...	Dhubri ...	Jamira.
Goalpara ..	Goalpara ..	Mechpara.
Golakganj ..	Agamani ...	Ghurlla.
Jamadarhat ...	South Salmara ...	Mechpara.
Jogighopa ...	North Salmara ...	Khuntaghat.
Kachugaon ...	Gosaigaon ...	Duar Ripu.
Krishnai ...	Dudhnai ...	Habraghat.
Lakhipur* ...	Lakhipur ...	Mechpara.
Malakhaoya ...	South Salmara ...	Aurangabad.
Manikarchar ...	Manikarchar ...	Karabari.
North Salmara ...	North Salmara ...	Khuntaghat.
Patamari ...	Dhubri ...	Jamira.
Pratarganj ...	Agamani ...	Ghurlla.
Rupel ...	Do. ...	Parbatjoar.
Salkocha ...	Bilasipara ...	Khuntaghat.
Sidli ...	Chapaguri ...	Duar Sidli.
South Salmara ...	South Salmara ...	Jamira.
Tamarhat ...	Agamani ...	Duar Guma.

* Combined post and telegraph office. Besides, there are departmental telegraph offices at Dhubri and Goalpara.

STATEMENT.—B.
List of villages containing three or more permanent shops.

Thana.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.	Thana.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION Manikarchar	Dears	4	Bilasipara	Bagrihari	24
	Kukurmara	3		Bilasipara	41
	Manikarchar	60		Kuribakati	9
	Fakirganjhat	17		Lakshimganj	12
	Gaibhat	5		Phutkibari	8
	Hajirhat	14		Saikooba	8
	Jamadarhat	13		Dingdinga	7
	Mandararchar	5		Netabari	6
	Salmara	9		Bataspaon	14
	Satimari	5		Chamapson	3
Dhubri	Sukohar	3	GOALPARA SUB-DIVISION.— Lakhipur Goalpara	Garapson	3
	Binsohara	5		Papragson	3
	Dhubri	97		Showari	3
	Gauripur	88		Lakhipur	0
	Patanari	6		Balaajuli	4
				Deoli	3
				Goalpara	3
				Marnai	4
Agamasi			North Salmara	Abhayapuri	18
				Barajirigson	2
				Birhora	2
				Jogishopa	3
				Kabaitari	3
				Kotahbari	3
				Mailegor	3
				Pachania	3
				Salmara	3
	There are permanent shops at each of the markets mentioned in Statement C.				

STATEMENT.—C.
List of Markets.

Thana.	Place where market is held.	Days of week on which held.	Thana.	Place where market is held.	Days of week on which held.
DHUBRI SUB-DIVISION— Manikarchar	Deara ..	Sunday.	Bilasipara ..	Bilasipara	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Jhandanga	Friday.	Bagribari	Bagribari	Monday and Friday.
	Kakripara	Saturday.	Fakirgaon	Fakirgaon	Thursday any Sunday.
	Manikarchar	Wednesday.	Kazipara	Kazipara	Monday and Friday.
	Pepulbari	Thursday.	Lakshminagar	Lakshminagar	do.
South Salmara	Fakirganj	Friday.	Saltmari	Saltmari	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Gothia	Tuesday and Saturday.	Salkocha	Salkocha	do.
	Hajirhat	Sunday.	Sapatgaon	Sapatgaon	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Jamadarhat	Tuesday and Saturday.	Gosaigaon	Gosaigaon	Tuesday and Friday.
	Manirchar Nitarhat	Wednesday.	Chamugaon	Chamugaon	Sunday.
Dhubri	Sukchar	Wednesday and Sunday.	Chapaguri	Chapaguri	Saturday.
	South Salmara	Monday and Thursday.	Garuibasa	Garuibasa	Do.
	Badadoba	Do.			Do.
	Binnachara	Wednesday and Sunday.			
	Diamsala	Monday and Thursday.			
Agamani	Dhubri	Every day.	GOALPORA SUB-DIVISION.		
	Gauripur	Do.	Lakhipur	Lakhipur	Tuesday.
	Kalirhat	Thursday and Sunday.			Sunday.
	Patamari	Tuesday and Saturday.	Avirampara	Avirampara	Wednesday.
	Agamani	Monday and Friday.	Chunar	Chunar	Monday.
	Chhatrasal	Monday and Thursday.	Jaleswar	Jaleswar	Friday.
	Diepdhepi	Do.	Nidanpur	Nidanpur	Tuesday.
	Dimakuri	Do.	Balljan	Balljan	Sunday.
	Dingdinga	Do.	Matta	Matta	Thursday.
	Dumurdohoo	Wednesday and Saturday.	Dhupdhara	Dhupdhara	Tuesday.
	Golakganj	Do.	Krishnai	Krishnai	Wednesday.
	Habibhat	Do.	Rangjuli	Rangjuli	Monday.
	Kalnari	Do.	Abhayapuri	Abhayapuri	Monday and Thursday.
	Kaldora	Do.	Barakhata	Barakhata	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Kherbari	Do.	Kabaitari	Kabaitari	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Khurpur Habibhat	Do.			
	Mahunamarhat	Do.			
	Pagarhat	Wednesday and Saturday.			
	Pratapganj	Tuesday and Friday.			
	Pundibari	Thursday and Sunday.			
	Rupsi	Tuesday and Saturday.			
	Sahaganj	Monday and Thursday.			
	Sanbanda	Wednesday and Saturday.			
	Tamarhat	Monday and Thursday.			

* Held only in the cold weather.

TABLE I.

Average maximum and minimum shade temperatures at Dhubri town.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Total year.
Maximum temperature.	74°·0	78°·0	86°·5	88°·7	85°·9	85°·7	85°·9	86°·0	85°·1	84°·5	79°·8	74°·3	82°·9
Minimum temperature.	53°·1	56°·0	63°·4	70°·7	73°·2	76°·4	78°·3	78°·3	77°·0	72°·8	63°·5	55°·1	68°·2

TABLE II.

RAINFALL.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn in brackets below the name of each station.

Months.		Average rainfall in inches.				
		Kachugaon	Bijai.	Marnai.	Dhubri.	Goalpara.
		(13 years.)	(13 years)	(12 years.)	(30 years)	(39 years)
January ...	...	0·56	1·89	0·49	0·39	0·43
February ...	...	0·74	0·72	0·51	0·55	0·61
March ...	...	1·99	2·35	1·62	1·86	2·22
April ...	...	9·26	10·46	8·65	5·01	6·76
May ...	...	19·29	18·38	19·80	16·14	14·05
June ..	...	33·13	23·68	29·58	25·28	22·30
July ..	...	36·94	27·52	32·92	16·71	16·66
August ...	...	24·50	17·87	20·85	12·18	11·95
September ...	...	21·25	21·37	21·31	13·32	11·54
October ...	...	5·47	6·37	3·96	3·75	3·91
November ...	...	0·23	0·25	0·08	0·14	0·21
December ...	...	0·26	0·15	0·11	0·14	0·21
Total of year	—	153·62	131·01	139·88	95·47	90·85

TABLE III.

Distribution of population by thanas.

Thana.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.
Dhubri ...	52,770	57,525	— 4,755	179·60	294
Agamani ...	89,836	84,592	+ 5,244	672·60	134
Balasipara —	65,460	47,848	+ 17,612	545·60	120
South Salmara ...	62,921	72,443	— 9,522	365·00	172
Chapaguri ...	58,115	55,373	+ 2,742	1,102·00	53
Goalpara ...	31,256	29,788	+ 1,468	214·30	146
Dudhnai ...	31,111	28,380	+ 2,731	265·00	117
Lakhipur ...	22,201	26,208	— 4,007	277·40	80
North Salmara ...	48,882	50,147	— 1,765	332·50	146
Total district ...	462,052	452,804	+ 9,748	3,954·00	117

NOTE.—The figures for area of thanas have been revised since the publication of the Census Report and do not therefore agree with the figures in Provincial Table IV, Part II of the Census Report of 1901.

TABLE IV.

General statistics of population.

PARTICULARS.	DHUBRI SUBDIVISION.		GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Male.	Females.
Population { 1901 ..	174,168	154,934	68,517	64,433	462,052	242,685	219,367
Population { 1891 ...	167,273	150,508	69,356	65,167	452,304	236,629	215,675
Population { 1881 ...	282,010	109,007(a)	164,222	106,880	446,232	229,149	217,083
Population { 1872	115,629(a)	109,007(a)	113,745	106,880	444,761	229,374	215,387
Variation { 1891-1901	+6,895	+4,426	-839	-734	+9,748	+6,056	+3,692
Variation { 1881-1891	+35,771	...	-29,699	...	+6,072	+7,480	-1,408
Variation { 1872-1881	+57,374	...	-65,903	...	+1,471	-225	+1,696
1901							
Religion—							
Total Hindus ...	75,082	62,539	34,457	31,618	203,696	109,539	94,157
Mahapurushias ...	2,060	1,765	15,431	10,136	29,382	17,491	11,891
Other Vaishnavas ...	48,712	43,188	12,673	17,402	121,925	61,885	60,540
Saktists ...	5,916	3,284	994	526	10,720	6,910	3,810
Sivaits ...	2,312	1,828	1,413	1,140	6,693	3,725	2,968
Muhammadaas ...	59,989	53,730	7,987	6,682	128,388	67,976	60,412
Animistic ...	37,862	37,795	24,373	25,088	125,618	62,735	62,883
Total Christians ...	695	644	1,118	1,038	3,495	1,813	1,682
Baptist ...	8	1	1,084	1,034	2,122	1,087	1,035
Lutheran and allied denominations ...	660	622	...	...	1,282	660	622
Other religions ...	540	226	82	7	855	622	233
Civil condition—							
Unmarried ...	94,843	59,060	37,947	27,235	219,085	132,790	86,295
Married ...	72,869	66,918	28,127	26,367	194,276	100,996	93,280
Widowed ...	6,456	28,961	2,443	10,831	48,691	8,999	39,792
Literacy—							
Literate in Bengali ...	5,978	248	4,363	183	10,777	10,341	436
Do in English ...	711	82	404	13	1,160	1,115	45
Illiterate ...	166,999	154,629	63,845	64,236	449,709	230,344	218,865
Languages spoken—							
Bengali ...	118,822	109,039	47,136	45,053	320,050	165,958	154,092
Eastern Hindi ...	8,374	1,874	2,238	432	13,918	10,612	2,306
Assamese ...	5,401	4,396	960	640	11,897	6,361	5,036
Bodo or plains Ka-chari ...	34,856	35,071	6,948	6,458	83,333	41,804	41,529
Garo ...	819	654	6,901	6,204	14,578	7,720	6,858
Rabha ...	2,023	2,044	3,908	5,579	13,549	5,926	7,623

(a) Includes Eastern Duars—males, 19,240; females, 17,807.

NOTE.—The figures for 1891 and the preceding years are taken from the respective Census Reports and do not include the changes effected by alterations in district boundaries during the intercensal periods.

TABLE V.

Birth-place, race, caste and occupation.

	DHUBRI SUBDIVISION.		GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males	Females	Males.	Females	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH-PLACE—							
Born in district ...	148,350	142,241	61,174	61,228	412,998	209,524	208,469
" " other parts of Province ...	1,546	819	2,684	2,336	7,385	4,280	3,155
" " Rangpur ...	8,011	7,005	458	137	15,611	8,469	7,142
" " other parts of Bengal ...	11,709	3,385	2,614	484	18,192	14,323	3,869
" " United Provinces ...	2,719	965	1,051	166	4,901	3,770	1,131
" " Central Provinces ...	66	32	66	25	189	182	57
" " Nepal ...	715	282	135	38	1,165	850	315
" elsewhere ...	1,052	205	335	24	1,616	1,887	229
RACE AND CASTE—							
Brahmans ...	1,371	520	937	378	3,208	2,308	898
Eurasians ...	10	10	1	.....	21	11	10
Europeans (a) ...	19	10	8	8	45	27	18
Garos ...	763	723	4,675	4,681	10,842	5,438	5,404
Jugs ...	3,288	2,897	3,616	4,003	13,804	6,904	6,900
Kacharis ...	272	357	7,070	6,968	14,667	7,342	7,325
Kalits ...	1,877	1,493	4,331	3,363	11,054	6,198	4,856
Kayasthas ...	1,027	517	271	151	1,966	1,298	668
Kochs ...	3,239	3,088	481	331	7,139	3,720	3,419
Mechs ...	34,833	35,204	1,921	1,752	73,760	36,804	36,956
Namasudras ...	3,061	2,752	545	312	6,670	3,606	3,064
Rabhas ...	2,119	1,873	11,326	11,818	27,136	13,445	13,691
Rajbansis ...	44,491	42,180	14,255	14,859	115,785	58,746	57,039
OCCUPATION—							
Workers ...	Sub-divisional details not available				207,270	149,683	57,587
Dependents ...					254,782	.....	.....
TOTAL SUPPORTED—							
Land holders ...	30,351	40,237	1,233	897	72,718	31,584	41,184
Tenants ...	110,142	76,959	52,692	35,708	275,501	162,884	112,687
Garden coolies ...	326	184	233	116	859	559	300
Farm servants ...	3,357	1,159	617	212	5,345	3,974	1,371
General labourers ...	3,422	1,995	475	378	6,270	3,897	2,373
Fishermen ...	3,338	3,128	1,751	1,741	9,953	5,084	4,869
Grain and pulse dealers ...	715	4,374	360	235	5,684	1,076	4,609

(a) Includes allied races

TABLE VI.

Vital Statistics.

Year.	Population under registra- tion in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fevers.	Bowel complaints.
1901 ...	462,052	44.25	34.09	0.46	0.46	29.70	0.29
1902 ...	"	45.23	32.28	0.60	0.27	27.54	0.19
1903 ...	"	43.22	33.02	1.04	0.17	28.48	0.20
1904 ...	"	46.58	31.03	0.61	0.07	26.94	0.29
1905 ...	"						
1906 ...	"						
1907 ...	"						
1908 ...	"						
1909 ...	"						
1910 ...	"						
1911 ...							
1912 ...							

TABLE VII.
Crop Statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.	Acrea.
Total cropped area	72,353	70,979	563,932	490,610								
Rice	55,233	57,714	409,194	346,000								
Mustard	7,518	8,890	59,639	52,000								
Sugarcane	86	116	1,000	1,000								
Pulses	1,560	1,921	21,777	21,000								
Jute	486	780	25,000	26,500								
All other crops	7,471	7,558	47,312	44,110								
TEA.												
DRUGS.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
Number of gardens	3	4	4	4								
Area in acres	1,167	1,173	1,173	1,178								
Area un- } held by Europeans	670	670	670	700								
der plant } Do. Natives	..	..	..	..								
Output in lbs.	149,692	134,131	195,639	213,498								
Labour force	470	439	493	508								

NOTE.—So far as these figures relate to permanently settled area, they are estimates only, and the figures for 1900-01 and 1901-02 do not include the permanently settled estates.

TABLE
Reserved

Name of reserve.	Area in sq. miles.	Character of forest.	1900-01.	1901-02.
			Rs.	Rs.
uma ...	26	A compact block about 30 miles from Dhubri along north trunk road. The forest is almost pure sal intersected by strips of low lying and swampy ground. A few trees only are found associated with sal chiefly <i>dillenia pentagyna</i> ; <i>careya arborea</i> , <i>sterculia villosa</i> ; the low lands are gradually filling up with <i>machi-lus odoratissima</i> . The undergrowth consists mainly of <i>chrodendron infortunatum</i> ...	86,213	21,415
Ripu ...	235	Situated along the foot of the Bhutan Hills between the Sankosh and Saralbhangra rivers. Generally flat. Sal occurs on the high land between the rivers but is intersected by large areas of grass. The grass lands which have been successfully protected from fire are gradually filling up with soft woods. Khair and sisau occur along the Sankosh, Ranga, Hail, and Saralbhangra rivers ...	81,231	34,434
Kachugaon ...	66	A tract of land south of the Ripu Reserve made over to the Forest Department for the establishment of forest villages in order to supply labour for forest work. With the exception of a few sal clumps, there is no timber of value. The area was constituted a Reserved Forest to ensure complete Departmental control.	...	...

VIII.
Forests.

RECEIPT.

1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
6,078	19,011								
57,199	11,398								
523	639								

TABLE
Reserved

Name of reserve.	Area in sq. miles	Character of forest.	1900-01.	1901-02.
			Rs.	Rs.
Chirang	234	Situated on the east of Ripu Reserve between the Saralbhanga and the Bhur rivers. The northern portion contains a considerable area of evergreen forest which has been little exploited so far. The southern portion is stocked with sal and with the exception of swampy depressions and water courses is almost fully stocked, principally with pole growth ...	14,397	23,988
Bengtal.	23	Is connected at the north-west corner by a narrow neck with the Chirang Reserve. Contains sal in clumps with large areas of grass. The latter is, however, gradually filling up with soft woods and sal along the eastern border. The forest is generally somewhat inferior in growth ...	331	826
Bhumeswar Hill	7	An isolated hill situated south-east of Sidli. Slopes steep. Highest point is 1637 feet above M. S. L. Contains sal both pure and associated with a few other kinds but more than half is grass land or steep slopes with bare rock ...	386	215
Bijul	196	Situated at the foot of the Bhutan Hill between the Buria and Manas rivers. A large number of streams intersect the area, and generally have kbair and sissu on both banks. Simul (<i>bombax malabaricum</i>) is making rapid progress and this will probably be the dominant species in time. Large areas of grass occur between the river beds in which soft woods are gradually making their appearance. ...	...	7

VIII.

Forests.—(Concluded.)

RECEIPT.

1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
30,392	31,333								
613	...								
820	...								
...	...								

TABLE

Fire protection and outturn of timber and

Details.				1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Area under protection ...	...	sq. miles		721	721	721	719
Area protected ...	...	sq. miles		632	639	704	719
Percentage ...	...	...	...	88	96	98	100
Cost ...	...	...	Rs.	3,526	3,611	2,901	3,207
RESERVED FORESTS.							
Area ...	...	sq. miles		721	721	787	787
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)							
Timber ...	...	cft.		228,091	324,916	260,022	322,426
Fuel ...	...	"		28,584	24,002	23,355	28,604
UNCLASSIFIED STATE FORESTS.							
Area ...	...	sq. miles		630	628	556	558
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)							
Timber ...	...	cft.		34,967	26,852	17,314	41,392
Fuel ...	...	cft.		25,664	22,082	18,200	21,136
Forest receipts ...	...	Rs.		90,407	96,279	1,02,484	72,638
Forest expenditure ...	...	Rs.		63,568	64,545	56,977	86,737
Surplus or deficit ...	...	Rs.		+ 26,844	+ 31,734	+ 45,507	-14,099

IX.*fuel and value of minor forest produce.*

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE X.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee at selected marts.

				DHUBRI.			GOALPARA.		
				Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.
1880	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...	18	8	16
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...	20	8	20
189	{ 2nd week of February	...	14	9½	20	16	9	18	
	{ 2nd week of August	...	13	9	20	13	10	18	
1900	{ 2nd week of February	...	16	10	18	14	10	20	
	{ 2nd week of August	...	13	10	13	13	10	14	
1901	{ 2nd week of February	...	9½	10	13	12	10	13	
	{ 2nd week of August	...	12	10	13	10	10	13	
1902	{ 2nd week of February	...	11	10	14	13	10	16	
	{ 2nd week of August	...	8½	10	16	12	10	16	
1903	{ 2nd week of February	..	12	10	16	13	11	16	
	{ 2nd week of August	..	11	12	16	13	12½	16	
1904	{ 2nd week of February	...	16	12	16	16	12	16	
	{ 2nd week of August	..	14	12	16	13	13	16	
1905	{ 2nd week of February	...	16	12	16	14	11	16	
	{ 2nd week of August	...	12	14	16	14	15	16	
1906	{ 2nd week of February	..							
	{ 2nd week of August	...							
1907	{ 2nd week of February	...							
	{ 2nd week of August	..							
1908	{ 2nd week of February	..							
	{ 2nd week of August	..							
1909	{ 2nd week of February	...							
	{ 2nd week of August	...							
1910	{ 2nd week of February	...							
	{ 2nd week of August	...							
1911	{ 2nd week of February	...							
	{ 2nd week of August	...							
1912	{ 2nd week of February	...							
	{ 2nd week of August	...							

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158, and 159	11	3	6	4	1	...		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	1	1	6	6	6	3		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	1	..	3	..	..	..		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	18	3	12	5	4	4		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	7	2	6	1	9	2		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	6	1	12	5	14	4		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40	9	4	9	1	6	2		
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	76	4	118	19	98	8		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344	4	..	3	1	2	..		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property	1	1	..	1	1	..		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382	81	30	144	40	116	47		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414	13	11	16	16	14	8		
(xiv) Lurking and Criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448	28	10	33	12	33	13		
(xv) Other minor offences against property	6	..	6	3	3	..		
Total	262	70	374	113	302	91		
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	3	1	2	..	3	2		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	5	3	2	..	2	..		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	1	..	..	..	2	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	4	4	2	2	5	..		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	..	..	3	1	4	..		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	7	1	2	1	5	3		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40	4	1	6	1	4	..		

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)								
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455, and 457-460 ..	29	3	31	2	17	2		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344 ..	1	1	2	1	1	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property ..	70	25	58	16	35	8		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379-382 ..	7	6	3	3	10	8		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	17	7	21	7	14	8		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	1	..	1	..	..	..		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	1	..	..	..	..	..		
Total ..	149	52	133	34	102	32		
DISTRICT TOTAL.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ..	14	4	8	4	4	2		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ..	6	4	8	6	8	3		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 306 ..	2	..	3	..	2	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ..	22	7	14	7	9	4		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357 ..	7	2	9	2	13	2		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ..	13	2	14	6	19	7		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433, and 435-40 ..	13	5	15	2	10	2		
(ix) House-breaking and serious house-trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460 ..	105	7	149	21	110	10		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344 ..	5	1	5	2	3	..		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property ..	1	1	..	1	..	..		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379 and 382 ..	151	55	202	56	151	55		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	20	17	19	19	24	16		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house-trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	45	17	54	19	47	21		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	7	..	7	3	3	..		
Total ..	411	123	507	147	404	123		
CIVIL JUSTICE.								
Suits for money and moveables ..	..	896	..	1,201	..	..		
Title and other suits ..	..	67	..	81	..	..		
Rent suits ..	..	197	..	169	..	..		
Total ..	..	1,160	..	1,451	..	..		

XI.

and Civil Justice.—(Concluded.)

[illegible]

TABLE
Finance.—

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue, ordinary ...	94,303	1,12,801	1,07,847	1,09,784	1,10,010
Land revenue, miscellaneous ...	3,883	11,690	1,785	1,375	12,450
Provincial rates ...	60,516	68,851	67,210	70,399	70,406
Judicial stamps ...	25,111	34,248	32,668	32,343	37,167
Non judicial stamps ...	18,045	12,147	12,128	25,029	14,993
Opium ...	26,938	13,521	12,998	13,630	13,742
Country spirit ...	17,232	29,454	32,800	34,830	40,921
Ganja ...	29,274	29,642	33,141	35,728	35,694
Other heads of excise ...	8,326	2,211	2,255	2,440	2,520
Assessed taxes ...	22,958	29,984	31,035	32,108	25,566
No. of assesses per mille ...	2	2	2	2	1
Forests ...	73,004	90,407	96,279	1,02,484	72,638
Registration ...	1,077	1,309	1,961	3,616	4,273
Total ...	3,70,667	4,85,765	4,81,607	4,63,761	4,38,380

TABLE
Miscellaneous

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
<i>Dhubri.*</i>	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Elephants ...	8,750	...	...	10,850
Fisberies ...	2,336	1,657	1,224	1,498
Other heads...	604	128	151	102
Total Revenue ..	11,690	1,785	1,375	12,450

* No miscellaneous land revenue is realized in Goalpara subdivision.

XII.*Receipts.*

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

XIII.*Land Revenue.*

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

TABLE

Land

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Aores.	Aores.	Aores.	Aores.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION—				
<i>Temporarily settled tracts.</i>				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Held on ordinary tenures ...	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	552	867	873	873
Area settled on 80 years lease ...	360	675	675	675
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	192	192	198	198
Total land settled under other tenures ...	1,020	1,020	1,012	26,701
Total temporarily settled area of subdivision ...	69,601	70,607	74,459	73,330
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—				
<i>Temporarily settled tracts</i>				
Total land settled under other tenures	681	681	681	681
Total temporarily settled area of subdivision ...	681	681	681	681
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Total area under permanent settlement* ...	1,518,982	1,518,982	1,518,982	1,518,982
<i>Temporarily settled tracts.</i>				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Held on ordinary tenures ...	68,029	68,720	72,574	45,756
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	552	867	873	873
Area settled on 80 years lease ...	360	675	675	675
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	192	192	198	198
Total land settled under other tenures ...	1,701	1,701	1,693	27,382
Total settled area of the district ...	1,589,264	1,590,270	1,594,122	1,592,993
Total unsettled area of the district ...	930,761	919,413	915,561	844,514

* Subdivisional details of the area of the permanently settled estates not available.

NOTE.—The total settled area shown in this table does not agree with the figures in the report on Land Revenue administration as this table does not include the area of revenue free estates.

TABLE XIV A.
Rate of annual rent per bigha of Zamindari land.

Name of estate.	Market land.	Homestead land.	Sali land.	Aahn land.	Transplanted Aahn land.		Gauripur estate.	Parbatipur estate.
	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.		Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
BIRJH—								
Pargana Khuntaghat						Homestead land ..	3 0 0	0-10-10 to 1-8-7 (//)
Bijni tahsil ...	20 0 0	0 8 0	0 8 0	0 4 0	....	Awal (1st class cultivated land) ...	0-13-0 to 1-0-0	0 8 4
Other tahsils ...	20 0 0	0-8-0 to 1-0-0	0-8-4 to 0-12-0	0 4 0	....	Doom (2nd class Do.)	0-10-0 to 0-12-0	0 7 1
Pargana Habrahat						Soem (3rd class Do.)	0-4-0 to 0-10-0	0 6 3
Krishnai tahsil ...	20 0 0	6-10-0 to 1-0-0	0-6-3 to 0-12-0	0 2 10	0-4-9 to 0-5-8	Chaharam and grass land or 4th class cultivated land ...	0-6-0 to 0-8-0	0 5 0
Dalgona tahsil ...	20 0 0	0-11-4 to 1-0-0	0-6-3 to 0-8-0	Do.	Do.	Land under betelnut garden ..	4 0 0	....
Rangjuli tahsil ...	20 0 0	1 0 0	0-7-0 to 0-8-0	....	0 5 6	Land under mango, jackfruit and bamboo	1 2 0	....
CHAPAR ...	20 0 0	0 9 6	0 8 0	(a) 0 4 6	....	Char land: ...	0 4 0	....
KARAIHARI						Marshy land	0 8 0	....
12 Ams share ...	20 0 0 (maximum)	2 8 0	1 0 0	(d) 0 12 0	....	Leik petit (culturable waste) land	0 3 0	....
4 Ams share ...	....	4 0 0	0 11	(e)	....	Gar Leik petit (unculturable waste) land	0 1 0	....
Pargana Taria (Gauripur and Parbatipur estates)	....	4 0 0	1 0 0	(e)	....			
							Rs. As. P.	Rs. As. P.
						Awal	1 3 7	
						Doem	0 15 5	
						Soem	0 13 11	
						Chaharam	0 10 10	

(a) Same rate for jute land.

(b) Other land Annas 8

(c) Rate for cultivated land in the plains.

(d) Do. Do. hills.

(e) Rate for cultivated land.

TABLE
Excise

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
DHUBRI SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	.. 14	15	13	13
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 1,539	1,852	1,932	2,157
	md. srs. ch. 6 6 0	md. srs. ch. 5 12 12	md. srs. ch. 5 34 0	md. srs. ch. 5 31 0
Opium issued ...	.. 22	23	24	23
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 7,011	6,064	6,669	6,584
Number of ganja shops ...	.. 22	23	24	23
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 9,186	11,762	12,360	13,836
	md. srs. ch. 26 9 12½	md. srs. ch. 29 1 5	md. srs. ch. 31 30 15	md. srs. ch. 28 28 5
Amount of ganja issued ...	.. 9,052	10,539	11,816	10,280
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 19	22	19	22
Number of country spirit shops ...	.. 23,698	26,220	27,500	32,803
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of distilleries ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Still-head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	.. 1,608	1,655	1,834	1,916
GOALPARA SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	.. 12	12	12	11
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 1,209	1,292	1,296	1,211
	md. srs. ch. 3 12 0	md. srs. ch. 3 13 0	md. srs. ch. 3 11 0	md. srs. ch. 3 13 0
Opium issued ...	.. 3,762	3,790	3,733	3,790
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 12	12	12	12
Number of ganja shops ...	.. 5,826	6,190	6,502	6,912
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 19 19 1½	13 39 1	16 0 12	14 31 0
Amount of ganja issued ...	.. 5,578	4,650	5 050	4,666
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 5	5	6	6
Number of country spirit shops ...	.. 5,756	6,580	7,330	8,118
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of distilleries ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Still-head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	.. 608	600	606	614
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Number of opium shops ...	.. 26	27	25	24
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 2,748	3,144	3,223	3,368
	md. srs. ch. 9 18 0	md. srs. ch. 8 25 12	md. srs. ch. 9 5 0	md. srs. ch. 9 4 0 (a)
Opium issued ...	.. 10,773	9,854	10,402	10,374
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 34	35	36	35
Number of ganja shops ...	.. 15,012	17,952	18,862	20,748
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 45 28 14	43 0 6	47 31 11	43 19 5
Amount of ganja issued ...	.. 14,630	15,189	16,666	14,946
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 24	27	25	28
Number of country spirit shops ...	.. 29,454	32,800	34,830	40,921
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of distilleries ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Still-head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	.. ...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	.. 2,211	2,255	2,440	2,520

(a) Includes 10 seers sent to the Garo Hills.

XV.
Statistics.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ob.
md. srs. ob.	md. srs. ob.	md. srs. ob.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.

TABLE XVI.

*Income and expenditure of Local Boards.***Dhubri.**

SOURCES OF INCOME.	Income.		HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	36,749	41,821	Post office ...	8,837	5,043
Police ...	3,981	4,501	Administration ...	203	203
Tolls on ferries ...	8,580	10,953	Education ...	8,657	11,702
Contributions ...	9,194	11,880	Medical ...	2,669	4,747
Debt ...	...	9,145	Civil works ...	34,779	49,900
Miscellaneous ...	358	903	Debt ...	...	9,126
			Miscellaneous ...	2,577	2,738
Total ...	58,812	79,203	Total ...	52,722	83,459

Goalpara.

SOURCES OF INCOME.	Income.		HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	23,805	26,974	Post office ...	1,217	2,363
Police ...	2,068	1,106	Administration ...	108	108
Tolls on ferries ...	1,384	2,133	Education ...	5,693	8,327
Contributions ...	7,865	14,040	Medical ...	2,611	2,252
Debt ...	...	2,313	Civil works ...	19,811	34,185
Miscellaneous ...	98	224	Debt ...	...	2,420
			Miscellaneous ...	1,690	1,557
Total ...	34,670	46,790	Total ...	30,620	51,212

TABLE XVII.

MUNICIPAL.

Dhubri Municipality.

SOURCES OF INCOME.	INCOME.		HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	2,254	7,791	Administration ...	325	420
Tax on houses and lands ...	1,505	2,596	Conservancy ...	1,464	3,226
Pounds ...	670	508	Public works ...	1,704	1,383
Fees from markets ...	1,761	2,917	Public instruction ...	222	312
Grants from Government and Local Funds ...	750	1,500	Drainage ...	451	310
Conservancy ...	913	2,440	Other heads ...	1,868	3,646
Other sources ..	586	782	Closing balance ...	2,310	9,237
Total ..	8,439	18,534	Total ...	8,439	18,534

Goalpara Municipality.

	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	1,678	810	Administration ...	266	783
Tax on houses and lands ...	2,237	742	Conservancy ...	493	1,628
Pounds ...	602	601	Public works ...	1,298	2,199
Grants from Government and Local Funds ...	500	1,000	Public instruction ...	325	298
Tax on persons ...	...	2,574	Drainage ...	182	103
Other sources ...	1,071	1,712	Other heads ...	1,773	861
			Closing balance ...	1,752	1,617
Total ...	6,088	7,439	Total ...	6,088	7,439

TABLE XVIII.

Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.					1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.							
SUPERVISING STAFF.							
District and Assistant Superintendents	...			...	1	1	1
Inspectors	..	...	...	...	2	2	2
SUBORDINATE STAFF.							
Sub-Inspectors	...	...	...	..	6	7	12
Head Constables	...	...	...	...	30	84	27
Constables	...	...	...	...	171	217	225
Rural Police	...	...	...	...	621	717	883
Union and Municipal Police	...	...	...	...	6	..	...
Total Expenditure	..	...	...	Rs.	77,516	88,363	1,11,444

Note—Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XIX.

Police Stations and Outposts.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.					SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
					Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	TOTAL.
DHUBRI SUB DIVISION.	Agamani	...	P.S.	...	2	1	8	11
	Bilasipara	...	P.S.	...	2	...	8	10
	Dhubri	...	P.S.	...	2	1	9	12
	Manikarobar	...	O.S.	...	1	...	6	7
	South Salmara...	..	P.S.	...	2	...	8	10
GOALPARA SUB DIVISION.	Dudhnai	...	P.S.	...	2	...	8	10
	Goalpara	...	P.S.	...	2	1	9	12
	Lakhipur	...	P.S.	...	1	...	6	7
	North Salmara...	...	P.S.	..	2	...	8	10

TABLE XX.

JAIL STATISTICS.

Dhubri Subsidiary Jail.

				1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population ...						
... { Male ...				27.29	20.28	28.08
... { Female ...				0.42	0.06	0.07
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000 ...				72	nil.	nil.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...				Rs. 2,422	2,096	2,191
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoner) ...				Rs. 87	40	40
Profits on jail manufacture ...				Rs. 859	190	477
Earnings per prisoner† ...				Rs. 85	18	22

Goalpara Subsidiary Jail.

				1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population ...						
... { Male ...				10.52	11.68	13.55
... { Female ...				0.11	0.12	0.18
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000 ...				94	85	nil.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...				Rs. 1,874	1,886	888
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoner) ...				Rs. 28	30	25
Profits on jail manufacture ...				Rs. 112	649	899
Earnings per prisoner† ...				Rs. 16	60	85

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE
Edu

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>High Schools—</i>				
Number ...	8	8	8	8
" of boys reading in High School Classes ...	86	107	86	101
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	126	121	121	136
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	236	220	288	269
<i>Middle English Schools—</i>				
Number ...	7	6	6	5
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	39	23	18	21
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	469	401	406	373
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools—</i>				
Number ...	8	10	10	9
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	25	39	24	48
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	375	406	323	325
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools—</i>				
Number ...	15	15	15	16
" of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes ...	61	83	73	85
" of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes ...	451	435	407	422
<i>Lower Primary Schools—</i>				
Number ...	206	196	191	192
" of boys reading in three Upper Classes ...	(a) 4,924	(a) 4,697	1,781	1,707
" of boys reading in Lower Classes ...			2,607	3,162
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools ...	10	10	9	8
" of Girls reading (whether in Girls' or Boys' Schools) in :—				
High Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Middle Vernacular Schools ...	45	39	48	30
Upper Primary Schools ...	35	29	21	5
Lower Primary Schools ...	356	315	291	310

(a) Separate figure

XXI.

cution.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

not available.

TABLE XXII.

Educational Finance.

PARTICULARS.	No of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1930-01 FROM.					EXPENDITURE PER HEAD OF SCHOLAR.		
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.			
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	As.	P.
Training and Special Schools ...	5	121	648	...	...	769	54	14	10
Secondary Boys' Schools:—									
Upper (High) ...	8	1,243	...	4,767	5,035	11,045	27	1	1
Lower (Middle) ...	15	1,096	3,687	1,173	4,662	10,618	12	6	3
Primary Boys' Schools:—									
Upper ...	15	...	1,543	448	774	2,765	6	2	9
Lower ...	206	...	11,456	605	2,119	14,180	2	14	1
Girls' Schools ...	10	...	903	...	665	1,568	7	6	4
Total ...	254	2,460	18,237	6,998	13,255	40,945	5	15	5

TABLE XXIII.
Medical.

PARTICULARS.	DUBURI SUBDIVISION.			GOALPARA SUBDIVISION.			TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.
	2	5	9	2	4	4(a)	4	9	13
Number of dispensaries ...	7-92	15-04	24-69	7-29	5-40	8-92	15-21	20-44	35-61
Daily average number of in-door patients ...	31-44	92-94	265-68	23-50	48-71	84-76	54-94	141-55	350-44
" " out-door "	3,380	15,008	46,875	2,244	7,098	16,872	5,474	22,101	63,747
Cases treated ...	93	408	843	42	118	229(b)	135	528	1,072
Operations performed ...	3,954	9,983	17,397	3,350	7,691	8,539	6,704	17,644	25,936
Total income ...	Rs. 1,389	3,243	5,764	1,512	2,146	1,554	2,781	5,389	7,318
Income from Government ...	397	2,693	4,160	335	1,695	1,840	732	4,388	6,000
Income from local and municipal funds "	1,174	1,808	3,093	1,063	655	1,646	2,237	2,463	4,759
Subscriptions ...	3,181	9,905	17,174	2,906	7,613	8,493	6,087	17,518	25,656
Total expenditure ...	1,826	2,991	7,085	1,914	2,074	2,034	3,740	5,065	9,069
Expenditure on establishment ...									
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated ...	} Subdivisional figures not available.						10-96(c) not available.		
Cost per successful case ...									

(a) Excludes the private dispensary at Abhayapuri where 2,444 persons were treated.

(b) Excludes 10 operations performed in the private dispensary at Abhayapuri.

(c) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE
Dispen

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Dhubri	6,792	11,213	6,662	8,917	5,581	8,892	5,286	10,015	6,241	9,881		
Gauripur	1,339	4,895	1,331	6,616	1,267	6,728	...	8,146	..	9,799		
Rupsi	875	4,170	842	4,810	794	4,210	967	5,320	898	5,156		
Bagribari	1,040	3,843	1,277	4,053	855	5,113	834	4,515	937	4,820		
Manikarchar	1,329	5,263	1,480	6,222	1,128	7,250	1,419	8,738	1,338	9,557		
Bilasipara	1,150	4,590	1,377	5,177	1,168	6,176	1,166	6,575	1,444	7,914		
South Salmara	1,459	4,437	1,560	5,621	787	3,864	938	4,800	1,068	6,867		
Agamani	884	2,776	1,025	3,653	764	4,455	1,009	4,508	1,152	3,764		
Goalpara	3,191	6,689	3,904	6,832	2,044	6,045	1,905	7,285	1,765	7,817		
Lakhipur	1,062	1,803	1,133	2,632	893	2,797	1,140	3,602	1,230	4,508		
Krishnai	995	3,361	1,397	3,730	1,057	4,545	1,688	7,800	1,082	8,624		
Marnai	1,071	1,434	2,049	3,678	774	3,778	807	3,914	875	4,069		
Abhayapuri	..	1,968	...	2,444	...	2,742	...	3,218	...	2,732		
Chapar	...	...	...	..	1,251	3,686	964	3,736	1,139	6,151		

XXIV.

saries.

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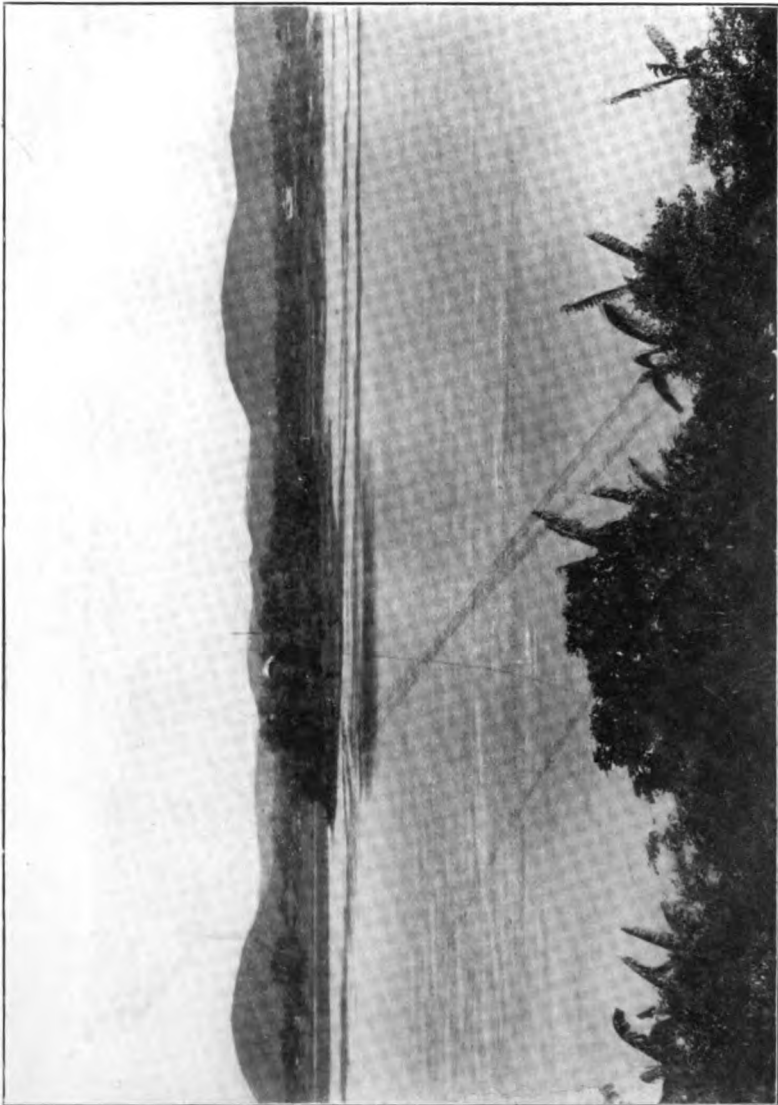
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GAUHATI FROM THE NORTH BANK OF THE BRAHMAPUTRA.

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME IV.

Kamrup.

BY

B. C. ALLEN, B. A., C. S.

Allahabad:

PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS.

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 2560.6



W. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.

To those unacquainted with Assam it may perhaps seem strange that no directory should be attached to the Gazetteer of Kamrup. There are, however, only two towns in the district, Gauhati and Barpeta, and they have been described at length. One green village is very much like another green village, and none possess such distinctive characteristics as would justify a separate and detailed description. Reference has, however, been made to all villages by name, which are noted either as trade centres of importance or as the seats of some particular industry. My acknowledgments are due to Mr. Jackson, Deputy Commissioner, and Mr. Barnes, Settlement Officer of the district, who have been so good as to examine the Gazetteer in proof.

SHILLONG :
June 4th, 1905. }

B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area—General appearance of district—Hills—Rivers—Marshes—
Geology—Climate and rainfall—Earthquakes—Fauna.

The district of Kamrup lies between $25^{\circ} 43'$ and $26^{\circ} 53'$ N. and $90^{\circ} 39'$ and $92^{\circ} 11'$ E. and covers an area of 3,858 square miles. On the north it is bounded by Bhutan, on the east by the districts of Darrang and Nowgong, on the south by the Khasi Hills, and on the west by Goalpara. **Area and boundaries.**

The greater part of Kamrup consists of a wide plain, through the lower portion of which the Brahmaputra makes its way, flowing a steady course from east to west. South of the river this plain is much broken up by hills. The two Chamaria mauzas are low swampy tracts, but below the trunk road there is hilly, almost mountainous, country; and near the southern frontier of the district there are peaks over 3,000 feet in height. These peaks form an integral part of the Assam range, but, east of Palasbari, isolated hills crop up above the alluvium, and at Gauhati reach right down to the water's edge. They even appear on the north bank of the Brahmaputra; and in the Patidarang tahsil, south of Kamalpur, and in the Hajo tahsil, east of Hajo, there are several hills, some of which are as much as 1,000 feet in height. **Kamrup, a plain with mountains in the south.**

The flooded tracts near the river.

North of the river the plain falls roughly into three sections. In places, and more especially in the neighbourhood of Gauhati, the river flows between high banks, which are only overtopped by a heavy flood. In the western part of the district a belt of marshy country, which is subject to inundation in the rains, lies on either side of the cold weather channel. The soil of this flooded tract is composed of a mixture of sand and silt, which in its natural state is covered by a dense growth of *nal*, *ikra*, *tora pat*, and other reeds and grasses. This jungle is absolutely impenetrable to a man on foot, unless he gropes his way along the tunnels that have been made through it by the buffaloes that are occasionally to be found in this locality; but from time to time patches of it are cleared and burnt, and are sown with summer rice or mustard. These fields afford a pleasant change to the interminable waste of reeds and grasses. They are surrounded by a thick wall of jungle, and generally contain a few huts, in which the husbandmen take up their quarters during the cold weather.

The central plain and the Kachari duars.

The central portion of the district is a densely populated plain, covered as far as the eye can reach with fields of waving rice, and dotted over with the groves of graceful bamboos which conceal the houses of the cultivators. The land is beyond the reach of flood; there is little of marsh or forest, and nothing to interfere with the operations of the farmer. This densely populated tract does not, however, stretch right up to the Bhutan Hills. The Gohain Kamala Ali is said to have been laid down

by the great Koch king, Nar Narayan, as the boundary beyond which the Kacharis should be allowed to practice their ancestral rites; and the country between the Gohain Kamala Ali and Bhutan is still to a great extent Kachari territory.

Hindus are very reluctant to settle there, as they think, and rightly so, that this part of the district is far from healthy for any one but the Kachari. The causes of this unhealthiness are not quite clear, but, according to the Hindus, are to be found in the fact that the evil spirits who haunt the place can only be properly appeased by the Kachari Pujas. It is possible, too, that a dread of Bhutia aggressions may still linger on, and it is certain that, on social grounds, the Assamese Hindu would be very reluctant to make his home amongst unconverted tribesmen. But, whatever it may be to the Hindu, to the European officer in the winter this country is far from unattractive. The level of the plain rises as it approaches the hills, and the light and sandy soil is covered with short turf or patches of *ulu* and thatching grass. The Kachari hamlets are dotted here and there over these grassy commons, each surrounded with a bank and fence, and differing in this respect from the straggling villages of the Assamese. They stand up boldly against the sky line, and, as pigs and poultry are not compatible with gardens, there is none of that wealth of fruit trees which surround the houses of the villagers in the central portion of the district. Rice is grown in fields which are irrigated from the numerous streams that issue from the hills, and in the winter the ground is bright and the

air fragrant with mustard. The mountains rise like a rampart on the north, and there is nothing in these fresh and breezy uplands to suggest that they are in any way inimical to human life.

**The country
on the south
bank.**

South of the Brahmaputra the scenery could not fail to charm every lover of the picturesque. Valleys of waving rice run up between hills which rise abruptly from the plain. The sides of these hills are steep, almost precipitous, but, wherever they can find a foothold, huge trees have thrust their gnarled roots amongst the rocks, and the hill is covered with forest interspersed with bamboos and the beautiful foliage of the creeping cane. There is none of that dreary expanse of plain which in other parts of India grows so tedious. The hills are never out of sight, and even the plain is picturesque enough, as it is much broken up by forest, swamps, and *bils*.

Mountains.

Except to the south of Dewangiri, where the boundary was pushed forward into the hills after the Bhutan war of 1863, no portion of the Himalayas falls within the district, and the mountain system of Kamrup consists of a section of the Assam range, and of a few outlying hills which crop up above the alluvium on both sides of the river. The fringe of the Assam range consists of ridge upon ridge of hills, all of them covered with dense tree forest and bamboo jungle, which gradually sink from peaks, two or three thousand feet above the level of the sea, to hillocks, whose tops are barely as many hundred feet above the flat alluvial plain. But, in addition to

these mountain ranges, isolated peaks and ridges are to be seen dotted about the plain south of the Brahmaputra, more especially in the Gauhati tahsil.

Many of these hills are thought to be sacred to various members of the Hindu pantheon. In the Chamaria mauzas there is the Buragohain parbat, which is said to be particularly dear to Siva, to whose honour a temple has been erected at its foot. The Gumi hill, so the local folklore goes, was the haunt of a pair of cobras who troubled the people in the days of Sib Singh. A party of soldiers was deputed to destroy them, but though they succeeded in despatching the female cobra (*gumi*), the male escaped to Dalgoma in Goalpara. In Chaygaon there is another Buragohain hill sacred to Siva, and a hill called Gobardhan, which is consecrated to Vishnu. In Boko there is a hill sacred to Parvati, which also bears the almost generic title Buragohain, and has a temple to the goddess on its summit; and in Luki and Bekeli, to the west, there are several holy hills such as Thakurpara, Tiniboini, Buragohain, Chilali, Borua, and Chamua. Sacred Hills.

In Palasbari the Dakhola hill is consecrated by the presence of a lingum, and the Maliata hill is sacred to the goddess Bagheswari. In the Gauhati tahsil the Dhomara hill is said to be dear to Durga, while the famous hill of Nilachal, a little to the west of Gauhati, is supposed to contain no less interesting a relic than Sati's organs of generation, which fell on that spot when her body was hewn in pieces by Vishnu. The

place has in consequence been an object of pilgrimage to many generations of Hindus, and its beautiful summit is dotted over with temples. In the Hajo tahsil there are several hills of mythological importance. The hill at Hajo itself, which is known as Kedar, or Kameswar, contains a temple which is an object of reverence to Buddhists and Hindus alike, while Siddheswar and Sanpara are dedicated to Siva. The large hill behind the Hajo bungalow is known as Poa Mecca and is revered by Muhammadans, and two small hills close by, called Duni and Muni, are said to have been hallowed by the presence of two famous Rishis. Another hill in this tahsil, which is visible for many miles to travellers coming up the Brahmaputra, is called the Hathimura, on account of its likeness to a kneeling elephant. In Patidarang there are several small ranges which shut in Gauhati on the north, and two of them, Madan Kamdev and Gopeswar, are sacred to the gods whose names they bear.

**General
appearance
of hills.**

Most of these hills are some seven or eight hundred feet in height. Their sides are steep and rocky, and they are as a rule clothed in dense tropical jungle, the outlines of the trees being softened and concealed by the dense veil of creepers which binds them into one harmonious mass of green. On some of them are to be found clumps of sal (*shorea robusta*), and here the vegetation is more sparse, as shrubs and brushwood do not thrive in a sal forest. A few of these hills have been planted out with tea, but the slopes were in many cases so steep that the soil was washed away from the roots of the

bushes, and the gardens did not thrive. In the outer ridges of the Assam range Khasis and Garos sometimes raise lac, chillies, betelnut, and vegetables, but the hills as a whole are too steep and unhealthy to be really of much use for agricultural purposes; and, though they would supply good building stone, the demand for that commodity since the earthquake of 1897 has been very limited.

The principal river of Kamrup is the Brahmaputra, **Rivers.** which flows right through the district from east to west. **The Brahma-putra.** At Gauhati it is confined between rocks and hills in a comparatively narrow channel, but even here the breadth of the telegraph wire across the river, measured from post to post, is 1·45 of a mile. Lower down the river spreads itself during the rains over the marshy country on either hand, and, when in flood, the distance from one high bank to the other is very great. It oscillates from side to side of the sandy strath through which it makes its way, its waters are surcharged with matter in suspension, and a snag or other impediment in its course will occasionally give rise to a huge *chur*. These *churs* are sometimes washed away by the next flood, sometimes remain for several years till they have developed into islands covered with reeds and jungle grass. The operations of alluvium and diluvium are continually being carried on on a gigantic scale, islands are formed and destroyed in a single season, new channels are opened and after a time are silted up. But year in year out the Brahmaputra carries down a huge volume of water, and somewhere on its

mighty bosom it is always possible to find a channel for the river steamers.

The Kulsi.

The principal tributary on the south bank is the Kulsi, which enters the district from the Khasi Hills, and flows a northerly course to a point a little beyond Chaygaon. Here it turns west, and, after winding its way through the Chamaria mauzas, falls into the Brahmaputra near the Nagarbera hill. Up to Chaygaon its course lies for the most part through forest clad hills, for whose timber it affords an outlet, but north of the trunk road it passes by villages, *bils*, and stretches of reeds and canes. During the cold weather a boat of four tons burthen can only proceed as far as Kukurmara, but in the rains can get right up the frontier of the district.

**The Digru
and Juljulia.**

After the Kulsi, the Digru and the Juljulia are the two most important rivers in Kamrup which fall into the Brahmaputra from the south. The Digru enters the district at Barnihat, where the Shillong-Gauhati road crosses it on a large bridge, flows a north-easterly course to Sonapur, and then turns north to fall into the Kalang, a short distance below the confluence of that river with the Brahmaputra. It is navigable by a boat of four tons burthen as far as Barnihat at all seasons of the year, and affords an outlet to the cotton grown in the lower hills. The western end of the district is drained by the Juljulia, which falls into the Brahmaputra west of the Nagarbera hill. In addition to these main rivers there are numerous other minor streams, but none of them are of very much importance.

North of the Brahmaputra the two great rivers are **The Manas.** the Manas and the Barnadi. They originally formed the boundaries of Kamrup to the west and east; originally, because, like so many of the rivers in Assam, they have more than once changed their courses and wandered away from their former channels. The Manas enters the district from the Bhutan Hills, and at a place called Matharguri divides into two branches. The Jia Manas, which is the main stream, flows for a considerable distance through Goalpara, but near its mouth again forms the boundary between the two districts. For the greater part of its course the river flows through jungle, as its repeated divagations render it impossible for permanent villages to be established on its banks. It is thus but little used as a trade route above its confluence with the Chaulkhoa, though a boat of four tons burthen can proceed as far as Bogidara even in the dry season.

The Barnadi, like the Manas, rises in the Bhutan Hills, **The Barnadi.** and also follows its evil example of changing its channel from time to time, so that it no longer invariably forms the boundary between Kamrup and Darrang. During the first portion of its course through the plains it flows through tree and grass jungle. Lower down, villages appear upon its banks, though it is only where the channel is fairly permanent that the people care to build their homesteads near the river. It is of considerable value as a trade route, boats of four tons burthen being able to proceed as far as Sonarikhal in the cold weather,

and right up to Malmura Ghat in the rains, and it thus affords an outlet to the rice, mustard, and pulse grown in the interior.

The Chaulkhoa and Pagladiya.

There are numerous other rivers that issue from the Bhutan Hills, but most of them are small and unimportant. Between the Barnadi and the Manas there is a complicated network of shallow streams, which meander over the plain and ultimately find their way into the Brahmaputra, most of them being first collected either in the Hajo Suta or the Chaulkhoa. The latter river flows past Nalbari and Barpeta, and falls into the Manas a little above its confluence with the Brahmaputra. Prior to the great earthquake it was a most valuable trade route into the interior, but during that fearful cataclysm of nature the bed of the river was raised, and, for a time at any rate, traffic was rendered very difficult. Boats can, however, still go up to Nalbari, which is one of the largest markets in Kamrup. The Pagladiya is a river which, as its name implies, has been a continual source of trouble. It rises in the Bhutan Hills and ultimately finds its way into the Chaulkhoa, but it seldom remains long in the same bed, and in the course of its vagaries it has more than once converted valuable rice fields into swamp, or, what is even worse, a stretch of arid sand. During the rains it is navigable by boats of four tons burthen as far as Alagjhar.

Other rivers.

Other rivers, which are utilized for the purposes of trade, are (1) the Puthimari, which falls into the Barnadi, and is navigable throughout the year as far

as Tamulpur; (2) the Baralia, up which a boat of four tons burthen can go, even in the cold weather, for twenty-five miles above its junction with the Chaulkhoa; (3) the Kalajal, which flows west of Kamalpur into the Hajo Suta; (4) the Sessa, which is a tributary of the preceding river; (5) the Kaldiya, which passes through Patharcharkuchi and falls into the Chaulkhoa; and (6) the Pohumara, which flows through Bijni and makes its way into the same main drainage channel.

Nearly all of these rivers flow on sandy beds along shallow channels, and as a natural result they not unfrequently shift their courses. Many of them, when they first debouch upon the plain, vanish into the earth, and only re-appear again at some little distance from the hills. The soil in north Kamrup is light and gravelly, and the drainage of the Himalayas is dissipated in a number of minor streams instead of being concentrated into two or three fine rivers flowing between fixed banks. This shifting of the river courses and dissemination of the drainage is a phenomenon which is seen to some extent in Goalpara and Mangaldai, but in no district is it found in so pronounced a form as in Kamrup. So ready, in fact, is the water to change its course that one river, the Dekadong, was originally nothing more than a small irrigation channel through which the Kachari villagers conveyed the water to their fields. It started as a little stream a few feet wide, but it has gradually increased in size till it is now a navigable river in the rains.

There are numerous *bils* and marshes in Gauhati, but no lakes of any considerable size. These *bils* are

General
characteris-
tics of river.

Bils and
Marshes.

generally shallow sheets of water which collect in the centre of a saucer-like basin. The level of a plain on which transplanted rice is grown must of necessity be very low, and a slight additional depression will admit of the retention of water throughout the year. Near the Brahmaputra these *bils* are generally surrounded by a rich belt of pasture land, and are shut in by a wall of elephant grass and reeds. In the higher country near the hills they are sometimes deep ponds, whose length is out of all proportion to their breadth, and are simply the remains of some river which has changed its channel. There are altogether 56 *bils* in the sadr subdivision which are large enough to be sold as fisheries, and 55 in Barpeta. One of the largest and best known of all is the Dhipor *bil*, about six miles west of Gauhati. It lies at the foot of the lower ranges of the Khasi Hills, and is a sufficiently pretty and picturesque piece of water. Other important *bils* are the Jahna, the Kukurmara, and the Tanparia in the south-west corner of the Barpeta subdivision, the Katakoli in Barpeta, the Asuchi in Upar Barbhag, and the Barbila in Hajo.

Geology.

The hills are for the most part formed of gneissic rocks from which excellent building stone could be obtained. The plain is of alluvial origin, and consists of sand and clay in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand near the banks of the Brahmaputra to a blue clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. Surface lime was discovered at the foot of the Bhutan Hills in 1871 by the Assistant Commissioner of Barpeta. It is of a superior description, but it is believed not to extend over a wide area.

The climate of Kamrup does not differ materially from **Climate** that of the other districts of Central Assam. Its principal characteristics are a cold and foggy winter, a moderately cool spring, and a fairly temperate but very humid summer. January is the coldest month in the year with an average maximum temperature of 73° and an average minimum of 49° . In March and April the weather begins to grow a little warm, warm, that is to say, in comparison with Dibrugarh, where the average maximum in April is less than 80° , but cool enough in comparison with Upper India. From April to October the average maximum is never less than 87° , and in July it is as high as 91° . During the height of the rains the climate is decidedly oppressive. The air is absolutely saturated with moisture, and the damp heat is trying alike to natives and to Europeans. The average maximum and minimum temperature in each month will be found in Table I.

In the central portion of Kamrup the rainfall is, for **Rainfall** Assam, comparatively low. At Gauhati it is only 67 inches in the year, and at Kamalpur but 65. But, as we approach the hills on either side of the valley, the rainfall gradually increases, and at Barduar to the south it is 89 inches, while at Tamulpur to the north it is 85. Barpeta lying towards the west is even wetter, and has an average fall of 96 inches in the year. From the beginning of November to the end of February there is very little rain, but towards the end of March there are heavy showers. The hot dry weather of Upper India is completely absent, and in April and May the rainfall is so

heavy that it might easily be imagined that the monsoon had broken. No less than 15 inches of rain fall at Barpeta in May, a quantity which actually exceeds the rainfall of August and September. In October the rains begin to stop, and November is one of the driest months in the year. Statistics of rainfall will be found in Table II.

**Storms and
floods.**

Kamrup is seldom visited by violent and destructive storms, though an interval of dry weather in the rains is often closed by a thunder shower, which at once relieves the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, and is thus extremely welcome. In March there are often hot unpleasant winds from the west, which in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra raise up clouds of sand. The country lying on either side of the river is exposed to injury from floods, which were particularly severe after the earthquake of 1897 had disturbed the levels and silted up the drainage channels. This subject is discussed at greater length in the chapter dealing with the agricultural conditions of the district.

**The earth-
quake of
1897.**

Kamrup, like the rest of Assam, has always been liable to earthquakes, but all previous disturbances of which there is any record were as nothing in comparison with the terrible cataclysm of 1897. This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon on the south-east to Kangra on the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country of the shape of a cocked

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIX, p. 52.

hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The shock occurred in Gauhati a little after 5. P. M. on June 12th, and was so violent that nearly every masonry building in the town was wrecked. All the public offices collapsed, with the exception of the post and telegraph office, the training school, and the dāk bungalow; and the European residents were rendered homeless. The wall surrounding the jail premises was thrown down, but, strangely enough, the wards, though they are erected on high pillars, were not injured. The roads began to crack as ice breaks up on the setting in of a thaw, and the water-supply of the town was thrown completely out of gear. The houses of the villagers, which are made of bamboos and reeds, were not as a rule thrown down, but in many parts of the district the fields were covered with water or deposits of sand. The ordinary drainage channels were choked, the beds of the rivers were raised, and the town of Barpeta, which was built upon comparatively low ground, was at once submerged. The Subdivisional Officer was compelled to take up his residence in a country boat, and it was in these uncomfortable vessels that public business had to be transacted, and even the prisoners lodged. Country boats became, in fact, the cutcherry, the treasury, and the Barpeta jail. The actual loss of life was comparatively small and only 29 deaths were directly attributed to the earthquake. But the damage done to cultivation was considerable, owing to the choking up of drainage channels and the disturbance of the levels of the country.

Fauna.

Wild animals include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig, and different kinds of deer, of which the principal varieties are the *barasingha* or swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*), the sambar (*cervus unicolor*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), the spotted deer (*cervus axis*) and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills, and when the crops are ripening do much damage unless the numbers of the herds are regularly kept down. For this purpose the district is divided into three mahals or tracts. The right to hunt in each mahal is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd, which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crushing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and, as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally

considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp, where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. Fourteen animals were caught in 1899-1900, the last year in which the mahals were sold by the Deputy Commissioner.

Rhinoceros live in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra and the Manas, and in the sparsely populated tracts in the north-west corner of the district, but they are now becoming very scarce. They breed slowly, and, as the horn is worth more than its weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. Steps have recently been taken to preserve the game in a tract of jungle land, about 90 square miles in area, in the northern part of the Bijni mauza. Herds of wild buffalo are found in the same locality, and wild bulls often serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese on the Brahmaputra *churs*. Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but in 1903 are said to have accounted for nearly four thousand head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows:—Elephants 4, tigers 8, bears 2, wild buffaloes 3, wild pigs 2, snakes 29, total 48. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 86 tigers, 146 leopards, and 23 bears. Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*syphæotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, pheasants and hares. Peacocks are also occasionally seen in the north of the district.

Other
animals.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Summary—Narak and legendary history—Visit of Hiuen Tsiang—Kamrup in the 11th century A. D.—The Koch Kings—Struggle between Muhammadans and Ahoms—Muhammadan invasions—The Ahom Kings—The Moamaria insurrection—Annexation of Assam by the British—Ahom government and social life—Buchanan Hamilton's description of Kamrup—Unhealthiness of Gauhati—The Bhutan war—Riots in 1893—Archæological remains—Chronological Table.

Summary.

The district of Kamrup originally formed part of the kingdom of Kamarupa, which at one time is said to have included part of North-Eastern Bengal and the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra. Narak's name is still remembered as one of the first protectors of Kamakhya, and his son Bhagadatta is said to have fought on the losing side in the great war of the Mahabharata. For many centuries the history of the district is involved in great obscurity. It seems probable that the line of Narak was displaced by a Bodo chief, who was subsequently driven eastwards to the valley of the Dhansiri, but in the eleventh century A. D. it seems clear that Kamrup was included in the territories of a powerful and civilized line of Pala kings. In the sixteenth century Kamrup passed into the possession of the Koch kings. The power of this dynasty declined, however, as rapidly as it rose, and in the seventeenth

century the district was the scene of continual conflicts between the Muhammadans and the Ahoms. In the short space of fifty years Gauhati was taken and retaken no less than eight times, but towards the end of the seventeenth century Kamrup was definitely incorporated in the territory of the Ahom Rajas. From that time onward the district formed part of their kingdom in name, though not always in fact, till in 1826 it passed into the possession of the British by the treaty of Yandaboo.

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of <sup>The king-
dom of
Kamarupa,
1200 B. C.—
1000 A. D.</sup> Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river on the western boundaries of Rangpur to the Dikrai in the east of the Darrang district. It was divided into four portions, *i. e.*, Kamapith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli, and Sau-mar-pith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa of whom anything in particular is recorded is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the Earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak.* He established his capital at Prag-jyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though somewhat headstrong prince. He was appointed the guardian of Kamakhya, and his name still lives amongst the people as the builder of the causeway up the southern face of the hill Nilachal, on which the temple of Kamakhya

* An account of the early kings of Kamarupa will be found in the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., published in J. A. S. B. Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

stands. His power and presumption were such that he asked Kamakhya to marry him, and the goddess consented, on the understanding that he would construct for her a temple, a road, and a tank in a single night. He was on the point of completing this task when Kamakhya made a cock crow before the usual hour, and the place about eight miles north of Gauhati, * at which Narak in his rage killed the cock, is still known as Kukurakata (the place where the cock was killed). He was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas at the great battle of Kurukshetra, and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ Kamrup formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

The copper plates of the eleventh century.

Further information with regard to the rulers of Kamarupa is given in certain copper plates, which on palæographical grounds have been assigned to the eleventh century A. D. † These plates are valuable evidence as to the state of the country at the time at which they were engraved, but their account of the genealogy of the reigning king must obviously be received with some degree of caution. The dynasty of Narak is said to have been displaced by Cala Stambha, a Mleccha or foreign conqueror, whose line ended in the person of Sri Harisa, and was succeeded by another family of foreign princes, the first of whom was Pralambha and

* A hill near Silghat is also called Kukurakata for the same cause.

† For a description of these plates see J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVI, pp. 113 and 285, and Vol. LXVII, part I, No. 1, p. 99.

the last Tyaga Singh. The dynasty of Narak was then restored in the person of Brahmapala. The invasion of the Mlecchas and their subsequent expulsion not improbably corresponds with the great irruption of the Bodos, who, according to their own traditions, were at one time ruling at Gauhati and were subsequently driven eastwards to Dimapur, but the whole of this period is involved in great obscurity.

In 640 A. D. Hiuen Tsiang visited Assam, and the record of his travels affords a momentary glimpse of the conditions of the country, a glimpse which is not unlike the view afforded by a flash of lightning on a dark and stormy night. The landscape, which has been shrouded in impenetrable gloom, is suddenly disclosed to view, and with equal rapidity is engulfed again in the blackest darkness; and nothing definite is known of the fortunes of Assam and its inhabitants either immediately before or after the visit of the great Chinese traveller. The country seems to have advanced some distance on the path of civilization. The soil was deep and fertile, the towns surrounded by moats, the people fierce in appearance but upright and studious. Hinduism was the national religion, and, though Buddhism was not prohibited, its milder tenets had comparatively few followers.

The evidence afforded by the copper plates which have been discovered in Kamrup, Nowgong, and Darrang suggests that the Pala kings, who reigned over Kamarupa in the eleventh century A. D., were powerful princes, who, in all that makes for material comfort and well-being,

*The visit of
Hiuen
Tsiang, 640
A. D.*

*Kamrup in
the eleventh
century A. D.*

were far in advance of the Assamese of the present day. They were lords of Pragjyotisha, the modern Gauhati, but seem to have resided at Durjaya, which in all probability occupied the site on which the station of Tezpur now stands. Their capital is described by the author of the grant in the most glowing terms. It was crowded with soldiers and merchants, and adorned with learned men, priests, and poets. A thousand plastered turrets hid the sun, and the strength of its ramparts were a source of mortification, or, as the inscription quaintly puts it, "pulmonary consumption," to various other mighty chiefs. The king studded the earth with his white-washed temples and the pillar monuments of his victories. He was evidently no mere local princeling, as he obtained great wealth from his copper mines; and there are no copper mines in the neighbourhood of Gauhati or Tezpur. Considerable allowance has to be made for the exuberance of the oriental imagination, but the precise injunctions issued to the "people of the Brahman and other castes, headed by the *district revenue officers and their clerks*," with regard to the actual grant of land, suggest a systematic and well organised government. Similar conclusions are to be drawn from the following description of the land itself and of its easements. "Be it known to you, that this land, together with its houses, paddy fields, dry land, water, cattle pastures, refuse lands, etc., of whatever kind it may be, inclusive of any place within its borders, and freed from all nuisances on account of the fastening of elephants, the fastening of boats, the searching for thieves, the inflicting of punishments, the

tenants' taxes, the imposts of various causes, and the pasturing of animals, such as elephants, horses, camels, cattle, buffaloes, goats, and sheep, as set forth in this charter, is given to him for the sake of God and the glory of my father and myself."

Brahmapala, in whose person the line of Narak was restored, was succeeded by his son Ratnapala, whose sceptre devolved not on his son but on his grandson Indrapala. Of the subsequent fate of these Pala kings we know but little, but it is clear that in the eleventh century A. D. Lower and Central Assam formed part of a civilized and powerful kingdom, which had reached that stage of development in which attention can be paid to the arts and amenities of life. The huge tanks in the neighbourhood of Gauhati and the bricks and mortar found in every direction beneath the soil show that it must once have been a place of very great importance. To the south there are the remains of ramparts * nearly four miles distant from the river's bank, and it is obvious that such an extended line of fortifications could only have been held by a large army. The contrast between the glories of the old Gauhati and the dead level of mediocrity, which is the distinguishing feature of the district at the present day, is very marked.

After the disappearance of the Palas, the next dynasty, of whom we have any certain record, is that of

The Koch
kings. Viswa
Singh, 1500 -
1534.

* The date of the construction of these ramparts is uncertain, but it is on record that Arjun the Buragohain made a wall round Gauhati in 1667 A. D.

the Koches, and here we reach the region of history and not of mere tradition and hypothesis.*

The founder of the Koch kingdom was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who is said to have been the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces. Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar, and reduced his state to order. The whole population was divided up into different corps under officers of increasing dignity, a thakuria being appointed over every 20 coolies, a saikia over every 100, a hazari over 1,000, an umra over 3,000 and a nawab over 66,000. He took a census of his subjects and found that the number capable of bearing arms was 5,225,000, a figure which suggests that an extra cypher must in some way have crept into the total reported to the king. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat; but the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made tributary, seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition. Another exploit credited to this prince is the re-discovery of Kamakhya. He visited the hill Nilachal, where he was shown a mound which was said to contain a deity. The prayers he offered were at once granted, and he accordingly had the mound explored, when the ruins of the old temple at once came to light. A new

* This account of the Koches has for the most part been taken from an interesting paper on the Koch kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., published in J. A. S. B., Vol LXII. Part I, No. 4, 1893.

temple was then erected, a gold coin placed between each brick, and Brahmans brought from Kanouj and other places to perform the sacred rites.

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A. D. by his son Malla Deva, who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but, mindful of his father's failure, commenced his operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it. The work was entrusted to his brother Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon (the modern Nazira), and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Kachari Raja and the Raja of Manipur were then reduced to the position of feudatory chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan would not, however, accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor

Nar Narayan, 1534—1584 A. D.

of Delhi and the Koch king. Shortly before this expedition Nar Narayan had restored the famous temple at Kamakhya, which had been injured by the Muhammadan invader Kala Pahar in 1553 A.D.

**Decline of
Koch king-
dom. Raghu
Rai, 1581 -
1593 A. D.**

Within the space of two generations the Koch kingdom had attained to an extraordinary height of prosperity and power, but its decline and fall were as rapid as its rise. For a long time Nar Narayan had no male offspring, and Silarai's son, Raghu Rai, was regarded as his heir. When this boy was approaching manhood, one of his uncle's wives gave birth to a son called Lakshmi Narayan, and Raghu Rai, realising that he had now no hope of succeeding to the throne, withdrew from the capital to Barnagar in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup. Nar Narayan endeavoured to compel him to return, but his soldiers were defeated and the king weakly resolved to divide his kingdom.* The territory east of the Sankosh was made over to Raghu Rai, while Lakshmi Narayan received the part that lay west of that river. Raghu Rai continued to reside at Barnagar, and seems to have been much devoted to religious exercises. In 1583 A.D. he restored the temple of Hajo in Kamrup, which had been injured by Kala Pahar, and endowed it with grants of land.

**Parikshit,
1593-1614
A. D.**

Raghu Rai was succeeded by his son Parikshit in 1593 A.D. This prince mounted cannon at Pandunath, to the

* According to Buchanan Hamilton, the kingdom was founded by Hajo, father of Hira and grandfather of Viswa Singh, and divided by Viswa Singh, who allotted the portion east of the Sankosh to Sukladwaj or Silarai, and that west of the river to Nar Narayan. On general grounds, however, this account seems to be less probable than that given in the body of the text.

west of the Kamakhya hill, and built a town at North Gauhati, whose fortifications can still be traced for many miles even at the present day. He then had the misfortune to provoke the cupidity of the Muhammadans, who determined to annex Koch Hajo, as Parikshit's dominions were called, as they had already succeeded in establishing their suzerainty over Lakshmi Narayan's kingdom of Kuch Bihar.* A strong force was sent up the valley under Mukarram Khan. Fort Dhubri was garrisoned by an army of 500 horse and 10,000 foot, but it was captured after a four weeks' siege; and a naval engagement, which took place in the Gangadhar river, was equally disastrous to the Koch king. Parikshit was driven across the Manas into Kamrup, and there surrendered to the enemy, but his brother Baldeo declined to abandon the unequal struggle and fled to the Ahoms for assistance.

Of the military prowess of these people the Musalmans themselves bear ample testimony, and for a time, at any rate, Baldeo met with a considerable measure of success. The Assamese fleet defeated the Muhammadans in a naval engagement on the Brahmaputra, and Hajo was besieged and taken. Emboldened by these victories Baldeo and his army advanced to Jogighopa, but here they were defeated and were forced to retire, first upon Budhnagar, and then to a place called Chothri near the foot of the hills. A pitched battle took place at Bishenpur in which the Assamese were defeated with great loss, and the Muhammadans then marched upon the forts at Pandu

Conflict between
Ahoms and
Muhammadans.

* An interesting account of the wars between the Muhammadans and Ahoms will be found in J. A. S. B., Vol. XLI, Part I, No. 1, 1872.

and Srighat on either side of the river near Gauhati. The Assamese fleet was defeated and dispersed, the forts taken, the post at Kajli near the confluence of the Kalang and the Brahmaputra captured, and by the beginning of 1638 A.D. the Ahoms had been driven out of Kamrup, and Gauhati had become the capital of the Moslem governor. But it was not for long that the Muhammadans remained in possession of their newly conquered territory. In 1658 Jaiyadwaj Singh took advantage of the disputes amongst the claimants to the throne of Shah Jehan, and marching down the valley of the Brahmaputra drove the Moslems and his former allies the Koches alike before him. An Ahom outpost was established at Hatsilah, and the Assamese annexed a portion of the Karaibari pargana in the Goalpara district.

**Mir Jumla
invades
Assam in
1662 A. D.**

The new subadar of Bengal was not, however, the man to brook this unprovoked aggression, for, though the Muhammadans had but little title to Kamrup, the Ahoms had still less, and in 1662 Mir Jumla led a powerful expedition to the conquest of the Assam Valley. The Ahoms had erected a strong fort at Jogighopa, defended by moats and holes which were thickly studded with bamboo spikes, but, on the approach of the Muhammadans, they fled without striking a blow. No resistance was offered in Kamrup. Gauhati, which at that time was situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, was occupied without the loss of a single man, and no attempt was made to hold the forts at Srighat, Pandu, and Kajli. A Muhammadan faujdar was left as governor of Gauhati, and the army proceeded on its way up the valley to the conquest

of Gargaon. The difficulties experienced during the march arose more from the nature of the country than from the obstinacy or enterprise of their opponents. The Ahoms continued to pursue their Parthian tactics ; they seldom offered open resistance to the invading force, and when they did so met with no success, and on the 17th March 1662 the Nawab entered Gargaon.

The history of the expedition is not unlike that of Napoleon's ill-fated irruption into the territories of the Czar, and rain and fever did for the Ahoms what frost and snow did for the Russian Emperor. When the rains broke the country was converted into one huge swamp and military operations were impossible. The invaders were shut up in their camp, and any stragglers who dared to venture out were promptly shot by Assamese who were lying in wait on every side. Sickiness began to break out amongst the soldiers, and, though there was abundance of rice, all other provisions were extremely scarce, salt being sold for as much as Rs. 30 per seer. With the commencement of the cold weather the Muhammadans were again enabled to resume offensive operations. But the health of the general was so bad, and the determination of his followers not to remain another rainy season in Assam so strong, that he found it expedient to accept the terms of peace offered by the Ahom king. At the beginning of 1663 the army began its retreat down the valley of the Brahmaputra, and after suffering considerable hardships finally reached Bengal. Mir Jumla himself did not survive the failure of his expedition, and died on the river a little distance above Dacca.

The Muhammadans compelled to retreat by disease.

After stormy
period
Gauhati
finally cap-
tured by
Gadadhar
Singh, circa
1685 A. D.

The unfortunate town, Gauhati, continued to be the sport of the contending powers. Four years after Mir Jumla's retreat it was re-taken by the Ahoms, but they only held it for five years, and in 1672 the Muhammadans found themselves able to re-occupy the town. From 1670 to 1679 was a most disastrous period in Ahom history. No less than seven princes succeeded to the throne, only to perish by poison or the knife of the assassin, and there was no central authority in the state strong enough to control the turbulent nobles or to repel invasion from without.

In 1681 Gadadhar Singh headed a rising against the prime minister, who had seized the reins of Government, murdered the puppet prince in whose name he ruled, and proceeded to set the state in order. He re-occupied Gauhati, and with its capture the last vestige of Muhammadan rule disappeared for ever from Kamrup. It most assuredly was time for the district to be allowed some rest. In the short space of fifty years Gauhati had been occupied by a hostile force no less than eight times, and this continual taking and re-taking of the town must have been fraught with the utmost misery for its inhabitants. From this time onward Kamrup became part of the Ahom territories, and was administered by a viceroy who was stationed at Gauhati. But before describing the growth of the Ahom power in Lower Assam, and the customs and institutions of that vigorous people, some reference must be made to the various inroads made by the Muhammadans upon the district prior to the final invasion of Mir Jumla in 1662.

Bengal was conquered in 1203 A. D., and the victorious general Baktiar Khilji proceeded eastwards into Assam. The difficulties of the country proved to be insuperable, and he was compelled to retire without annexing any portion of the Brahmaputra Valley. He was followed by Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur Shah, who is said to have advanced as far as Sadiya in 1220 A.D., but, though at first successful, he too was at last defeated and driven back to Gaur. Thirty-six years later Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan invaded Kamrup and erected a mosque in commemoration of his victories, but his triumph was of very short duration. When the rains broke the Assamese returned and attacked the invaders, who were now weakened with disease. The general and most of his followers were killed, and only a few returned to Bengal to tell of the destruction of the army. He was followed by Muhammad Shah, who in 1337 A. D. "sent 100,000 horsemen well equipped to Assam, but the whole army perished in that land of witchcraft and no trace of it was left." *

This extract plainly reflects the feelings with which Assam was regarded by the Muhammadans. Time after time their armies, which had overrun Upper India and Bengal with so little difficulty, were foiled by the heavy jungles and the moist unhealthy climate of the Brahmaputra Valley. Such continuous failure could only in their estimation be due to some more than natural cause.

To the conquest of Nilambor by Husain Shah it is hardly necessary to refer, as his capital Kamatapur is

* Alamgirnamah, p. 731.

situated in Kuch Bihar, and it is doubtful whether the Muhammadans on this occasion advanced into Kamrup.

In 1506, Turbuk marched up the valley as far as Kaliabar, and there gained a victory over the Ahom troops. He met with less success in his second invasion of Assam, and was defeated and killed in a bloody battle on the Bhareli in 1532. Twenty-one years later Kala Pahar, a Hindu apostate, made a marauding expedition into the valley, and attempted to demolish the temples at Kamakhya and Hajo. A fanatical zeal for the propagation of his new religion seems, however, to have been his guiding motive, and no attempt was made to permanently annex new territory to the Mughal Empire. The various wars between the Muhammadans and the Koches and the Ahoms have already been described in detail.

The Ahoms.

We must now retrace our steps to describe the origin of the Ahoms, the vigorous power who drove the Muhammadans from Kamrup, and from whose faltering hands the British received the sovereignty of Assam.

The Ahoms were a Shan tribe from the kingdom of Pong, in the upper valley of the Irawadi, who, at the beginning of the thirteenth century A. D., crossed the Patkai, and settled in the south of the territory which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The country at the foot of the hills was occupied by tribes of Morans and Borahis, whom they easily subdued, and who were soon absorbed by inter-marriage with their conquerors. The history of the gradual development of the

Ahom power, and of the manner in which they overthrew first the Chutiya kingdom at Sadiya, and afterwards the Kachari kingdom at Dimapur, will be found in the Gazetteer of the Sibsagar district, as this is a matter with which Kamrup had little or no concern. At the beginning of the seventeenth century the Ahom kings began to intervene in the affairs of Lower Assam, and their struggles with the Ahoms for the possession of Gauhati have already been described.

Gadadhar Singh was the first king to definitely annex Kamrup to the Ahom territories, but the zenith of their power was reached in the reign of his successor Rudra Singh (1695—1714). This powerful prince waged successful wars against the Kachari Raja and the king of Jaintia, and his generals brought both of these chiefs captive to the Ahom Court. He founded a new capital at Rangpur in the Sibsagar district, reduced the whole of Assam proper to order, and finally died at Gauhati in the nineteenth year of his reign. The Rudeshwar temple, which stands on the north bank of the river opposite the town, was erected by his son in memory of this sad event.

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince, much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands. Both he and his two successors were ardent Saktists, and erected numerous temples, and made liberal grants of land and *paiks*, for the maintenance of their special form of Hinduism.

Rudra Singh
1695—1714
A. D.

Sib Singh,
1714—1744
A. D.

**Pramatta
Singh,
1744-1751.
Rajeswar
Singh,
1751-1769.**

The reign of his successor Pramatta Singh was uneventful, and, during the incumbency of the next prince Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds and declined the proffered honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and, though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

**Lakshmi
Singh,
1769-1789.
The Moama-
ria Insurrec-
tion.**

Lakshmi Singh's reign was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borbarua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom chroni-

clers, and it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named Nahor Khora and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain. The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagini Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamarias, had forcibly taken her to wife, and, as he was bending down

Success and
subsequent
defeat of
Moamarias.

at the *bihu* to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader, the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age nor sex.* The house of the Moamaria mahunt was surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamaras were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

Gaurinath
Singh,
1790-1795.

Moamaras
again victo-
rious.

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorizing any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamaras with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one

* The Moamaras say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is no doubt an exaggeration.

gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees forsaking their wives and children." The highest Hindu castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his terror left even his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur, but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler. "The Mataks harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Daffa Hills, and others in the fort of the Buragohain who was fighting with the Mataks for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792 a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was re-taken, Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai, was subdued, and in March 1794 Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his

enemies in check by the help of sepoy trained on the English system.

**Kamaleswar
Singh,
1795-1800
A. D.**

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died and was succeeded by his son Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daflas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush,* a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandu-ghat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoy in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

**Hardatta's
insurrec-
tion.**

During the reign of this prince there was a local insurrection in Kamrup, which is commemorated in the songs of the villagers at the present day. The relations between the Ahoms and the natives of the district, or Dekheris as they were somewhat contemptuously called, were far from cordial, and the latter were not allowed to

* This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkandazes to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonry, the size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

remain within the fortifications of Gauhati after nightfall. One night a respectable Chaudri, named Hardatta Borua, was abused by the officer commanding the guard below the Nilachal hill. Indignant at this insult, Hardatta assembled his friends and followers and attacked Gauhati. The Ahom governor fled, and for a short time Hardatta occupied the town, but, on the approach of a strong Ahom force, he sought shelter in the jungle. He was soon captured and put to death, but his memory is still cherished by the people of Kamrup.

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Buragohain or prime minister and fled to Calcutta and thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and reinstated the Bor Phukan; but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed, and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned with a large force and replaced him on the throne.

They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820 Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Women who fell into their hands were violated with every circumstance of

Final collapse of the Ahom kingdom.

brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra. The Burmese evacuated Gauhati without striking a blow, and such fighting as there was took place in the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong. Rangpur was occupied in 1825, and in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

Ahom Administration. The paik system.

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms, but their history is more intimately connected with the Sibsagar district. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *powa paik*. Over every twenty *gots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *baras* a *saikia*, and over every ten *saikias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the state, and, while so engaged, was supported by the other members. The Raja and his

ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments, which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs, constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into disrepair. The duty of providing the various articles required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indication of the reluctance with

which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

War.

But though the common people seem to have been compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gaddi*. Their guides, however, failed them; they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design, and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moa-

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, *i.e.*, labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the ~~Assamese~~ would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

marias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A. D., the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, bloodthirsty and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'élite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

Muhamma-
dans des-
cribe Ahoms
as brave
soldiers.

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty

Uncertainty
and arbitrar-
y character
of Govern-
ment.

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume XLI, Part I, pages 49—100.

of tenure, under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were desposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions, and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the administration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that "blood may not be shed."

Instances
of this.

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh, 1611—1649 A. D. A Katak, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander

on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Kataki reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Kataki responsible for watching the movements of the enemy, whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Kataki was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern; a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented, and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later, the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to re-visit his former home would suffer the penalty of death with all his family "even to the child in the womb." Five hundred men attempted to return, as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

**Savage punishments:
an official
blinded for
not dismounting
before
his official
superior.**

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769—1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the time. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior the Borborua. A complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles and his brother were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee-pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century, it was no uncommon thing

to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more than one case is quoted, in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment too was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

The Ahoms, even after they became a powerful nation, Social life amongst the Ahoms. seem to have adhered to a simple style of life, in which there was little of extravagance or luxury. They have left few masonry memorials of their rule; the Raja's palace is almost invariably referred to as "a planked house," and, according to Buchanan Hamilton, the king alone was allowed to erect an edifice of brick. Shoes might not be worn except by the special license of the king, bedsteads and curtains were only to be found in the houses of the rich, and all but the most important visitors to a noble's house sat on the bare ground. The account given of the Raja's palace at Gargaon by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion is pitched in a more exalted key. Twelve thousand workmen had been engaged on its construction for a year, and the audience hall was 120 cubits long by 30 wide. "The ornaments and curiosities with which the whole woodwork of the house was filled defy all description: nowhere in the whole inhabited world would you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation, and pictures." The absence of all reference to these wonders in the Ahom histories suggests, however, that the Muhammadans were anxious

to magnify the power and majesty of the prince they had subdued.

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals, which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar. They were fond of fishing and shooting, and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction than the one at Auniati; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook, or to the greater beauty of the *sattra* precincts.

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were Saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611—1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who, in 1692, plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shown even to the sacred head of the Auniati *sattrā*, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhāt. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakhinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off, while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and fowls cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of their unholy food.

Attitude of
Ahoms to-
wards Hin-
duism. Sa-
vage perse-
cution of
Vaishna-
vism.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the

reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniati gosain ; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

**Laxity of
Ahom Hin-
duism.**

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms found the restrictions of their new religion irksome ; and their gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral ; while not only buffaloes but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this clearly shows that even towards the end of the eighteenth century the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs ; a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moamaria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman ; while at the beginning of the nineteenth century

the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress, a breach of the *convenances* for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their woman folk in honour, and, even at the present day, the *purdah* and all that it implies is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the 17th century, two of the queens almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king, at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714—1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed; and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his stepmother the control of the *Khangia mel*, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the

The position
of women

time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Buragohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shown her and she fell, pierced with spears; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

**Condition of
Province at
time of
cession to
the British.**

In estimating the effects of British rule it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The native system of government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors, but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any lust for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese, the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy.

Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansjri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouth of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1808 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force, which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman, Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills:—"Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the Province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had

Native testimony on this point.

already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure, been fulfilled ; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property, which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

**Buchanan
Hamilton's
account of
Kamrup.**

Buchanan Hamilton, who compiled a memoir on Assam in 1808 A. D., pointed out that the viceroy at Gauhati was not only the ruler of an extensive district, but was in charge of the relations between Assam and Bengal, and was thus placed in a position of exceptional responsibility and power. On the southern frontier of Kamrup there were various minor chiefs, whose position was not unlike that enjoyed by the siems in the Khasi Hills at the present day. They exercised judicial powers in petty cases, and were bound to supply the Ahoms with *paiks*, or money in their place, and to attend with a contingent in times of war. The headquarters of these chiefs, many of whom were of Garo birth, were situated at Barduar, Bholagram, Mairapur, Lukhiduar,

Pantan, Bongram, Vagaduar, Beltala, Dumoriya, and Rani. Gauhati, which is described as being a very poor place, was garrisoned by some five or six hundred men, about one hundred of whom were natives of Western India.

For many years after our occupation of Assam Gauhati remained the headquarters of the Province, but it enjoyed a very evil reputation for unhealthiness. Mr. Cosh, writing in 1837, said that, to judge from the reports of the natives themselves, it was the most unhealthy station in Assam, and that the records of the hospital exhibited a rate of mortality surpassed by few stations in India. Few positions, in fact, could have been worse chosen in so far as health was likely to be concerned.*

Gauhati
headquarters of
Assam; its
unhealthiness.

Colonel Hopkinson, the Commissioner, brought a powerful indictment against the district when advocating the transfer of his headquarters to Shillong.† Mr. David Scott, the first Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, declined, he said, to sleep on shore at Gauhati, though his indifference to exposure and fatigue were well known. Mr. Robertson, the next Commissioner, and his successor, Mr. Cracroft, avoided the town most sedulously, and it was only towards the end of his service that the next Commissioner, General Jenkins, spent any considerable portion of his time in this unfavoured spot. Colonel Hopkinson's denunciations of the town find strong confirmation in the crowded cemetery.

*Topography of Assam, p. 88.

†Letter No. 338, dated 28th September 1866, to the Board of Revenue.

The European population of the place must have been very small, but death was only too busy in their ranks. There is hardly a year which is not commemorated by its tombstone, and in many years there were three or four deaths amongst this small community. On the erection of Assam into a separate Province under a Chief Commissioner the headquarters of the new Administration were located at Shillong, but since that date sanitary improvements have done much to improve the public health, and Gauhati is no longer the unhealthy place it was.

**The Bhutan
war of 1864.
Occupation
of Dewan-
giri.**

No disturbances occurred in Kamrup in connection with the Mutinies of 1857. The next historical event with which the district is connected is the Bhutan war of 1864, which was the natural sequel to the indignities offered to the envoy, who had been sent to adjust the differences outstanding between that country and the Government of India. At the time when we entered upon the administration of the district we found the Bhutias in possession of the country lying at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, *i.e.*, the duars of Bijni, Chappakamar, Chappaguri, Banska, and Ghaukalla. The Bhutias were allowed by us to remain in occupation till 1841; but in that year the duars of Kamrup and Mangaldai were annexed by the Company, and an annual payment of Rs. 10,000 was offered as compensation to the Bhutan State. On the outbreak of war it was decided that operations should be undertaken against the whole length of the Bhutan frontier. In December 1864, a column, under the command of Colonel Campbell, marched northwards

from Gauhati to attack the Bhutia post at Dewangiri.* The main body advanced with considerable circumspection, and, while they were still reconnoitring the pass, news arrived that Dewangiri had been captured by Captain Macdonald with fifty native policemen. The resistance offered had not been of a very serious character, and the British loss consisted of one policeman killed and five wounded. A garrison of six companies of native infantry and two mountain howitzers of the Eurasian battery was quartered in the village, and it was thought that they would have no difficulty in repelling any attack that might be made upon them.

The Bhutias had, however, returned in considerable force. About 5 A. M. on January 30th the camp was suddenly rushed, and, though the enemy were driven off with some loss, they continued to assume an exceedingly aggressive attitude. Our loss on this occasion was one British officer killed and one wounded, and four sepoy killed and thirty-one wounded. Four days later the Bhutias threw up a stockade within five hundred yards of the camp, and managed to cut off the principal source of water-supply. They also succeeded in occupying the mouth of the Darranga pass, and on February 4th Colonel Campbell decided to evacuate the post, and to make his way by another route to the plains. A retreat by night through mountainous and jungly country is not an easy operation to perform, and a certain want

Dewangiri
abandoned
and re-
taken.

*The information contained in the following paragraphs has been taken from "Bhootan and the Story of the Dooar War," by Surgeon Rennie. London, John Murray, 1866.

of steadiness was shown on this occasion. Some of the wounded were left behind, the guns were abandoned, and subsequently fell into the possession of the Bhutias, and officers and men lost everything which they possessed. The enemy did not attempt to pursue the retreating troops, but it was of course impossible to acquiesce in this reverse. A strong force was collected at Kumrakatta, and at the beginning of April the position was re-taken without difficulty. Not a single soldier was killed on the British side, but the Bhutias lost over one hundred men, as the native troops, on forcing their way into the stockade, seem to have got out of hand, and to have gone to unnecessary lengths in breaking down the resistance offered to them. With the re-capture of Dewangiri active operations ceased on the Kamrup frontier, and since that date the village has continued to form part of British territory.

**Subsequent
history.**

The subsequent history of the district has been uneventful. During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century, public health was extremely bad, and thousands of persons died of the curious contagious fever known as *kala azar*, which is described in the section on the medical aspects of the district.

**The re-as-
sessment of
1893.**

In 1893 the land revenue assessment, which had remained unchanged for a quarter of a century, was enhanced, and the villagers in certain portions of the district combined to refuse payment. On December 24th, 1893, a mob of about 200 men looted the Rangia market, and, though the District Superintendent of Police was deputed to the

place, the attitude of the people was so threatening that he was unable to arrest the persons who were responsible for the outrage. The Deputy Commissioner accordingly proceeded to Rangia, and succeeded in securing the ringleaders. A large crowd soon assembled and threatened to sack the thana, and were only dispersed by the sepoy and armed civil police that formed his escort. Affairs then quieted down in this portion of the district, but on January 21st the villagers assaulted a mauzadar and mandal at Kapla in Sarukhetri mauza, and beat the latter so savagely that he died a few days afterwards. The Subdivisional Officer happened to be in camp close by, and succeeded in arresting many of the rioters. But, as the mob were evidently prepared to rescue them by force, he was compelled to let them go, and when night came he fell back upon Barpeta. The Deputy Commissioner proceeded to his assistance without delay, arrested 59 of the rioters, and, when the mob threatened to rush his camp, dispersed them with his escort, which consisted of 15 sepoy and 15 armed police. The disturbances then quieted down, and the revenue of the district was collected without difficulty. The earthquake of 1897 is the only incident of grave importance which has occurred of recent years, and the effects of that terrible cataclysm of nature have already been described.

In addition to the numerous temples, to which reference is made in the ensuing chapter, there are several remains of interest to the antiquarian in Kamrup. Barnagar, which was formerly the capital of the Koch kings Bali Narayan and Parikshit, is situated about eight miles north

Archæological remains.

of Barpeta. The site is now covered with dense tree forest, but fruit trees, tanks, and the signs of human habitation can still be seen. Another memorial of the Koch dynasty is the Gohain Kamala Ali, the great road which was constructed by Nar Narayan through North Kamrup and Mangaldai. Near Betna, in the Rangia tahsil, is the Baidargarh, which is a square enclosure, or fort, surrounded by embankments, each of which is some four miles in length. It is said, but very little weight can be attached to the tradition, to have been the capital of King Arimatta.* A similar but smaller fortification, about ten miles further on in the Kharija Belbari mauza, is known as the Phenguagarh. Prior to the earthquake of 1897 there was a very interesting stone bridge in Sila Sindurighopa mauza, about three miles from the Kamalpur rest house. It was 146 feet long, with 22 water ways, and the foot way was formed of solid blocks of stone supported on stone piers. Local tradition has it that it was built by Baktiar Khilji or Mir Jumla, *i e.*, by the first or by one of the last of the Muhammadan invaders of Kamrup, but Dr. Bloch is of opinion that it was the work of a Hindu architect. The bridge is now completely wrecked, but it lasted longer than the river it was built to cross, and at the present day there is no stream within three miles of it.

At Gauhati there are some fine carvings on the northern face of the rocks by the Brahmaputra below the Sukleswar temple. The principal image is that of Vishnu, and is sup-

* The villagers in the neighbourhood know very little about the fort. Some ascribe it to Bikramaditya, others talk vaguely of a raja and a princess with whom he had eloped, a reminiscence of the rape of Rukmini by Krishna.

ported on the right by Surjya and Gonesh, and on the left by Durga and another figure too mutilated to admit of its identification. The town itself bears all the signs of having originally been a place of much importance. The large tanks, and the remains of brick buildings which are found in every direction beneath the soil, suggest that it must have been a wealthy and a populous city, and on either side of the river there are earthworks linking up the gaps between the encircling hills which enclose a very considerable tract of land.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

AHOM KINGS.		MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS.	
A. D.		A. D.	
1228	Sukapha.	1204	Baktiar Khilji invades Assam.
1268	Sutenpha.	1220	Ghiyasud din Bahadur Shah advances to Sadiya, but is defeated.
1381	Subinpha.	1256	Iktiyarud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan invades the Brahmaputra Valley, but is ultimately defeated.
1293	Sukangpha,	1337	Muhammed Shah sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish.
1332	Sukampha		
1364	Sutupha—treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Sagrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.		
1276-1380	Interregnum.		
1380	Sukemthi, a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1380-1398	Interregnum.		
1398	Sudangpha.		
1407	Siyangpha.		
1422	Suphukpha.		
1439	Susingpha—defeats Nagas.		
1488	Suhangpha—defeated by Kacharis in 1490, and murdered by a convict.		
1493	Supimpha, a cruel prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1497	Suhunmung, alias Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja. Conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom 1523. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bharell rivers. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur, his capital, in 1536. Assassinated 1539.		
1539	Sukhenmung—built Gargaon (Nazira).	1509-1534	Viswa Singh—Founds Koch kingdom; advances against Ahoms, but was apparently defeated.
1552	Sukampha,	1534-1584	Nar Narayan—Conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon circa 1563 A. D. Subdues Raja of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur, Tippera and Sylhet. Kala Pahar, invades Assam in 1563 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.
1611	Suchengpha or Pratap Singh. Assists Bali Narayan against Musalmans, besieges Hajo, but is driven back. Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.	1581-1593	Raghu Rai obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankosh.
1649	Surumpha. Deposed.		
1653	Suchingpha. Deposed.		

KOECH KINGS.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—Continued.

AHOM KINGS.		KOCH KINGS.	
A. D.		A. D.	
1654	Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh, Ahoms occupy Goalpara 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla, who enters Gargaon, 1661.	1603-1614	Parikshit—Builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakshmi Narayan, calls in Muhammadans to his aid.
1663	Chakradwaj. Ahoms reoccupy Gauhati in 1667.	1614-1637	Bali Narayan—Invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance.
1670	Adayaditya Singh—Assassinated.		
1672	Sukumppha—poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati.		
1674	Suhung—Assassinated.		
1674	Teenkungiya—Assassinated.		
1674	Suhungpha—Blinded and murdered.		
1677	Sudinpha—Assassinated.		
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja)—Assassinated.		
1681	Gadadhar Singh—Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.		
1695	Rudra Singh—Founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.		
1714	Sib Singh—a weak prince, who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibsagar.		
1744	Framatta Singh.		
1751	Rajeswar Singh. Decline of Ahom power.		
1769	Lakshmi Singh. Outbreak of Moamaria rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.		
1780	Gaurinath Singh. Driven to Gauhati by Moamaras. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is, however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan Barrang Raja asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.		
1795	Kamalewar Singh. Deposes Krishna Narayan.		
1809	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816.		
1816	Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.		

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Concluded.***AHOM KINGS.**

A. D.	
1818	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave. Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between British and Burmese Governments.
1826	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo, by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Area and density—Variations in population—Migration—Sex—Marriage—Infirmities—Language—Castes—Religion—Temples—The Mahapurushias—Sattras—Muhammadanism—Animism—Buddhists—Christianity—Occupations—Marriage customs—Amusements and festivals.

Kamrup covers an area of 3,858 square miles and supports a denser population (153 to the square mile) than any other district in the Assam Valley. To the south the plain is much broken up by the outlying spurs of the Khasi Hills, and on this side of the Brahmaputra the population, except in the Palasbari tahsil, is comparatively sparse. In Boko, in the south-west corner, there were in 1901 only 71 persons to the square mile over a total area of 432 square miles, and in Chaygaon tahsil, lying east of Boko, there were only 104. North of the river, in the Gauhati subdivision, things are somewhat different. The central portion of the plain, which consists of the Hajo, Patidarang, Rangia, Nalbari, and Barama tahsils, is fairly densely peopled. Taken altogether these tahsils cover an area of 840 square miles, and in none of them was the density less than 300 to the square mile in 1901, while in Nalbari it was as much as 613, a figure which must be considered distinctly high for a purely rural tract. The highest point was reached in the Khata and Upar Barbhag mauzas, where, in 1901, there was a density

Area and
density.

of about 840 to the square mile. North of the Gohain Kamala Ali, population again falls off, as Hindus have a prejudice against settling on the further side of that road. It is said that the Koch king Nar Narayan (1534—1584 A.D.) declared that this should be the boundary between the Hindu territory and the country in which animistic rites might still be practised, and it is a fact that, not only in Kamrup, but in Mangaldai on the east and Goalpara on the west, the country at the foot of the Bhutan Hills has been almost entirely given up to the Bodo tribe. In the Tamulpur tahsil and the Bijni mauza, which covered an area of 707 square miles and occupied respectively the north-east and north-west corners of the district, there were only 57 persons to the square mile. Except in the Bajali tahsil the whole of the Barpeta subdivision is very sparsely peopled. Taken as a whole there were 91 persons to the square mile, and in Bagribari near the Brahmaputra the density sank as low as 8. The population and density of each tahsil or mauza in 1901 will be found in Table III.

**Towns and
villages.**

Kamrup contains two towns, Gauhati and Barpeta, and 1,716 villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages, that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated

this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. Except in the Kachari duars, where the hamlets stand out more clearly on the grassy plains, it is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance; but, taking them for what they are worth, it appears that villages in Kamrup run small, as more than half the rural population in 1901 were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

The first recorded estimate of the population was that furnished by Captain Bogle in 1835 * The statistics were collected by the chaudris, who had never before troubled themselves about acquiring knowledge of this nature, and were said to be seldom men of business or detail. The Collector observed that the population was undoubtedly much underrated, an uncivilized people having at all times an aversion to record the number of their families. The total returned was 243,317 souls, and it is evident that this estimate, and one quoted by Mr. Robinson in 1841 (271,944), † were much below the mark. Seven years later the population was reported to be 387,775. ‡ The centre of the district was said to be densely peopled, but

Growth of
population :
early esti-
mates.

* *Vide* his letter No. 16, dated 28th July 1835, to the Commissioner of Assam.

† A descriptive account of Assam, p. 282

‡ Report on Assam (Kamrup) by J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta, 1854.

the fact that during the five years preceding Mr. Mills' visit there had been hardly any increase in the cultivated area and the land revenue demand suggests that the population had not been growing very rapidly. Cholera had for two years been ravaging the district; whole villages, according to the magistrate, had been depopulated, and in 1851 and 1852 upwards of 1,500 deaths occurred in Gauhati town alone.

Decrease of
population
between 1881
and 1901.

	Population.	Percentage variation	
1872	561,681		recorded in 1872, and at each
1881	644,960	+14.8	successive census. The cen-
1891	634,249	- 1.6	sus of 1872 was not a syn.
1901	589,167	- 7.1	chronous one; it is generally

supposed to have been incomplete, and the large increase that occurred during the next nine years was, in all probability, partly due to the superior accuracy of the enumeration of 1881. At the same time there can be little doubt that there was a substantial growth of the population during this period. The decrease that was disclosed in 1891 was largely due to the mortality from *kala azar* which entered the district in 1888. The nature and history of this disease is discussed in the medical section, and we are now only concerned with its effect upon the development of the population. *Kala azar* was most virulent in the country lying south of the Brahmaputra, and in this tract the population declined by nearly 12 per cent. North of the river the population increased by about 2 per cent. During the last intercensal period the mortality from fever and *kala azar* continued to be high, especially in 1892, 1896, and 1897, and there were had

outbreaks of cholera and smallpox. The result of all this sickness was that the census of 1901 disclosed a serious decrease in the population. The great earthquake affected cultivation by blocking the water channels and covering certain tracts with deposits of sand, and thus compelled a considerable number of persons to leave the district and seek a livelihood elsewhere. After allowing for this increase in emigration, it appeared that the number of persons born in the district and censused in the Province decreased by nearly 6 per cent. The injury done by the earthquake was especially pronounced in the Barpeta subdivision, and the gross decrease in this portion of Kamrup was no less than 14·5 per cent. In the sadr subdivision it was 5 per cent. The tracts which suffered most severely were the Hajo and Palasbari tahsils, which lie north and south of the Brahmaputra, a little to the west of Gauhati. In Hajo the decrease was as much as 18 per cent, but many of the people seem to have left their ruined rice fields and to have settled in the Rangia and Barama tahsils further north, and here the census actually disclosed an increase of the population. In Barpeta the mauzas near the river lost most heavily. In Bagribari there was a decrease of 77 and in Sarukhetri of 61 per cent, and the Bajali tahsil was the only place that showed an increase. It is satisfactory to know that the tide at last has turned, and that there has been an excess of births over deaths between 1899 and 1904.

The proportion of immigrants is lower in Kamrup than in any other district in the Plains of Assam, and in 1901

Immigra-
tion.

foreigners formed less than 3 per cent of the total population. The total number was 14,152, of whom 8,139 came from Bengal, the districts most strongly represented being Ranchi, the Sonthal Parganas, Saran, and Dacca. The tea industry is not of much importance in Kamrup, the gardens are largely worked with local labour, and barely one-fourth of these Bengalis were censused on the plantations. Other immigrants were Nepalese (1,559), who have settled down as graziers and in some cases as cultivators, the *kaiyas* or merchants from Rajputana (997), who are found in large numbers in Gauhati, and Bhutias, most of whom are temporary visitors who come down to trade in the cold weather, though there is one Bhutia village at Dewangiri which contains some seventeen houses. There are also a considerable number of natives of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh (1,579), who are employed as carters, artisans, and coolies. A large proportion of these up-country men were censused in Gauhati town. Kamrup loses heavily by inter-district migration, and in 1901 only received 5,203 persons in place of the 25,835 born in Kamrup and censused in other parts of the Province. About 9,000 of these persons were found on the tea gardens of the four upper districts, and nearly 5,000 were censused in Goalpara. In the last named district the proportion between the sexes of the emigrants from Kamrup was fairly equal, so that in all probability they were ordinary cultivators who had moved across the boundary of the district, and were hardly emigrants in the sense in which that term is generally understood.

The figures in the margin show that the proportion of **Sex.**

Number of women to 1,000 men.

1872	...	...	919
1881	...	...	966
1891	...	...	976
1901	...	...	1,011

women has increased at each successive census, and that in 1901 they actually exceeded the men in numbers.

This, however, was solely due to the fact that the men when they go to Upper Assam generally leave their womenkind at home. Amongst those born in Kamrup and censused in the Province there were only 981 women to every thousand men as compared with 966 in 1891. Amongst the Hindus the proportion of the sexes was practically equal; amongst the Muhammadans the men were in a majority of 4 per cent; but amongst the animistic tribes there was a large surplus of women, due to the movement of the Kacharis to the tea plantations. The increase in the proportion of women has been ascribed to the greater resistant capacity of the so-called weaker sex in seasons of special unhealthiness, such as that from which the district has recently been suffering.

Infant marriage is unfortunately more prevalent than **Marriage.**

Percentage of Hindu girls married and widowed in ages

	0-10	10-15
Goalpara	4·8	62·4
Kamrup	1·5	23·9
Nowgong	0·2	10·5

in most of the districts of Assam Proper. The statement in the margin shows the percentage of Hindu girls

who have performed the marriage ceremony (a) under 10, and (b) between 10 and 15, in Goalpara, Kamrup, and Nowgong. In Goalpara as in Bengal "the healthy sense which bids the warrior races keep their girls at

home until they are fit to bear the burden of maternity seems to have been cast out by the demon of corrupt ceremonialism, ever ready to sacrifice helpless women and children to the tradition of a fancied orthodoxy."* The result is that a large proportion of little girls are hurried into matrimony long before their bodies are ready to support the strain it usually entails, and long before they are fitted to become the mothers of a healthy and a numerous progeny. In this respect Kamrup is better than Goalpara, but falls far short of the standard of excellence attained in the neighbouring district of Nowgong, where it is quite the exception to marry a girl before she is physically fit to undertake the functions of maternity. Another important feature of the matrimonial statistics is the proportion of potential mothers, under which head are classed married women between 15 and 40 years of age. Natural growth must largely depend upon this factor, and in this respect Kamrup is somewhat handicapped. In spite of the preponderance of women the proportion of potential mothers in 1901 was only 156 per mille, which is slightly lower than the proportion for the Province as a whole, and considerably lower than the proportion in the Central Provinces.

Infirmities.

Kamrup is fairly free from the two infirmities of in-				sanity and deaf-mutism, and the proportion afflicted in 1901 was considerably below
	Kamrup.	Assam.	India.	
Insane	4	5	3	
Deaf-mute	5	9	6	
Blind	12	10	12	
Lepers	14	13	5	

* Report on census of India for 1901, p. 433.

the average for the Province as a whole. The number of blind persons is, however, considerable, and the proportion of lepers exceeds the provincial average and is largely in excess of that for the whole of India. The statement in the margin shows the proportion per 10,000 afflicted in Kamrup, Assam and the Indian Empire as a whole. The figures refer to males only as the returns for females are, in the case of leprosy at any rate, not complete.

There is no district in the Province where Assamese ^{Language.} is so generally used as in Kamrup. In 1901 it was returned by 83 per cent of the population, but the dialect in vogue is not as pure as that which is spoken in Upper Assam. Eleven per cent of the people returned Bodo or Plains Kachari as their customary form of speech, but most of these tribesmen use Assamese in their intercourse with the outside world. Assamese is described by Mr. Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali*. It comes from Bihar through Northern Bengal and not from Bengal Proper. The plural and feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax, and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh being converted into h by the Assamese and ch into s. Kachari, or Bodo as it is more properly called, is a fairly rich language remarkable for the ease with which roots can be compounded together. A grammar of this language has been

*Report on census of India, 1901, Vol. I., d. 324.

published by the Rev. S. Endle*. Mikir is another indigenous language which is spoken by the tribesmen of that name who are found in the south of the Gauhati subdivision. It forms a link between Bodo and the Naga group of languages but is more closely connected with the latter.

**Caste and
race.**

Castes, which according to Assamese ideas are respectable, are more strongly represented in Kamrup than in any other district of the Brahmaputra Valley. The number of Brahmans is considerable, and forms about half the total number found in the whole division. After the Brahmans come the Ganaks, and two-fifths of the Ganaks of the Assam Valley were censused in Kamrup. Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners, but, in spite of its small foreign population, there are more Kayasthas in Kamrup than in any other district in the valley. It is, however, the Kalitas who give the touch of superiority to the district population. They represent the aristocracy amongst Assamese agriculturists, and more than half of the total number in the Province are found in this single district, where they form over a quarter of the total Hindu population. The Kewats, another reputable caste from whose hands a Brahman will take water, are found in considerable numbers, and there are other castes such as the Shaha and Saloi who enjoy this dignity. Respectability is, in fact, the keynote of the caste system in Kamrup. The Kacharis or Bodo, with their kinsfolk the Rabhas, are fairly strongly

* Shillong Secretariat Press, 1884.

represented, and there are naturally a large number of the Koch, the caste into which the Kachari is received on conversion. On the other hand, there are hardly any Ahoms or Chutiyas, the two race castes which are found in such numbers in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The European element in the population (64) is also small, the tea industry being of comparatively slight importance. In the following pages a short account is given of each of the castes which had 5,000 or more representatives in the district in 1901. An alphabetical glossary of all the castes of the Province will be found in the Census Report for that year.

The number of Brahmans in Kamrup is larger than **Brahmans.**

Males	...	...	11,399
Females	...	...	11,746

that in any other district of the Assam Valley. With the

exception of a few families they belong to the Kanna branch of the Jajur Veda, and owing to the absence of the divisions inaugurated at the time of Ballal Sen they are known as the Western Vedics. According to the Kalika Puran, colonies of Brahmans were settled in Kamrup by Narak Asura before the war of the Mahabharata, and local tradition has it that the 72 Brahman families of Soalkuchi were present at the *sradh* ceremony of Bhagadatta, Narak's son. This is, of course, tradition and nothing more, but it seems fairly clear that Brahmans were settled in Kamrup from a very early period. Barbhag, Banbhag, and Barigog, three mauzas all within a few miles of Nalbari village, are the chief centres of the Brahman population, and there are considerable numbers of this aristocratic caste at

Pokoa and Dharmapur in Nalbari, and at Sila in the Barpeta mauza. Most of them make their living as cultivators, though they are, of course, obliged to get the actual ploughing done by others, and a considerable number go to Kuch Bihar and Eastern Bengal in search of work as priests, or, failing this more respectable calling, as simple cooks.

Garos.

The Garos are a tribe of Bodo origin, the bulk of whom are to be found in the hills that bear their name.

Males	...	...	2,527
Females	...	...	2,617

According to their own traditions they came originally from Thibet and settled in Kuch Bihar. From there they were driven to Jogighopa, and thence to Gauhati, where they were enslaved by the Assamese. They were, however, delivered by a Khasi prince, and then travelled *via* Boko to the Garo Hills. Most of the Garos are to be found in the hilly country on the outskirts of the Khasi Hills. They live in better style than many of the hill tribes, and are to some extent differentiated from other members of the Bodo family by the good position accorded to their women and the extraordinary scantiness of the national costume. A full account of the manners and customs of the Garos will be found in the Monograph on the Garo tribe.

Jugis.

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale. Like other humble castes they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account

Males	...	...	8,636
Females	...	...	8,818

they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation of Siva. A few years ago the Jugis at Barpeta assumed the sacred thread, at the instigation of a Brahman priest, and declared themselves to be gentlefolk. It was suggested to them that they should prove their good position by requiring their priest to marry a Jugi girl; but the Brahman fled as soon as this proposal was made to him. Their attempt to raise themselves in the social scale was thus an utter failure, and they were entirely excluded from the *namghor*, though previously they had been allowed to enter the outer room.

The Kacharis or Bara (mispronounced Bodo), as they Kacharis
their origin.

Males	...	...	43,122
Females	...	...	48,982

 call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which

is found, not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tippera, south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper water of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it and is to some extent confirmed by a prayer which is in use amongst the Dimasa* in the North Cachar Hills. This prayer refers to a huge peupul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahma-

*The Dimasa are the section of the Kacharis who live in the Cachar district.

putra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill on which the temple of Kamakhya stands, in Kamrup. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali and finally settled in Dimapur. The inscriptions recorded on copper plates in the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D. refer to the conquest of Kamarupa by a foreign dynasty which was subsequently replaced by a king of the line of Narak*. It is possible that the Kacharis were the invading force, and on their expulsion from Gauhati they might not unnaturally have retreated towards the Dhansiri valley.

No connection between Kacharis of Kamrup and Dimapur.

The Kachari kingdom was one of the strongest powers with which the Ahoms were confronted when they entered the valley of the Brahmaputra. Their capital was located at Dimapur on the Dhansiri river, and at one time they were in possession of the western part of Sibsagar, and the greater part of the Nowgong district. Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536, and the Kachari king was compelled to move his capital to Maibang. Subsequently they migrated to the plains of Cachar, and the last representative of the line was assassinated there in 1830. It seems, however, doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of the Brahmaputra were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and, though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater

* *Vide* J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVII, Part 1, No. 1, 1898, page 99.

than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang no doubt from the same stock, but there is no evidence to show that they were ever united by the tie of a common nationality, or that the Kacharis of Kamrup were more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar, than are the Rabhas and Lalungs.

The following legend is prevalent amongst the Dimasa. Dimasa legend of the separation of the two tribes. It would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Kamrup.

“Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day; but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety.”

The ordinary Kachari of Kamrup is an illiterate villager who has only vaguely heard of the Kacharis of Nowgong, but knows that their language differs slightly from his own. He is quite innocent of history, has never heard of the Kachari raj, and as a source of information of anything prior to the immediate present is absolutely useless.

At the present day the tribe is not split up into any endogamous or exogamous subdivisions. Their social Social position and distribution of Kacharis.

position is of course low, but the Hindu gosains are willing to receive them as their disciples, and, if they are prepared to abandon their pork and beer, will even enrol them as members of the Koch caste. The bulk of the Kacharis live on the grassy plains at the foot of the Himalayas, and are especially numerous in the Rangia, Tamulpur, Barama and Bajali tahsils. Their villages are surrounded with fences, but present a dirty and untidy appearance, as pigs and fowls are allowed to wander about in every direction. Agriculture is their normal occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. They are fully alive to the advantages of irrigation, and conduct the water of the hill streams on to their fields through little artificial channels which are made by the combined labour of the villagers. But, though efficient agriculturists, they have not that contempt for daily labour which is so marked a characteristic of the Assamese. They readily take work on tea gardens, and in 1901 nearly 14,000 Kacharis were censused on the plantations. Though still using their tribal form of speech in their own villages, most of them can speak and understand Assamese.

Religion.

Their religion is of the ordinary animistic type, and is mainly concerned with the propitiation of the various devils who are the source of all their trouble. The principal god is called Siju and is represented by the cactus which is seen growing in the courtyard of every house. He is worshipped twice a year, at the time when the summer and winter rice are harvested, and is said to punish those who neglect this ceremony with an early death. The following is a list of some of the principal demons.

Buna, habitat uncertain, causes madness. Kabir, lives in trees, kills cattle and men by some form of rapid illness that attacks their chests and causes them to spit blood. Pani-debota, lives in water, causes rheumatism, is propitiated by one duck, one pair pigeons, four small fowls, unripe plantains, vermilion and tamul pan. These dainties are set afloat on a raft made of four plantain trunks fastened together, and it is to be hoped that the god is pleased. Pikhas, habitat uncertain, sends fever and is propitiated with one large fowl, seven small, one vessel of rice beer, and one pair of pigeons. Bira is another unpleasant deity who drives people, especially women, mad, and sets fire to houses. When elephants eat the dhan there is puja to the Buragohain or Siju, and when tigers kill the cattle to the goddess of tigers. Difficult labour, strangely enough, does not seem to be ascribed to the malignant action of any demon. It is treated with village remedies which, though probably of little use, cannot be less effectual than the pujas prescribed in other and less serious cases. When there is any uncertainty as to the particular deity responsible, an *ojha*, or wise man, is called in, who throws a handful of cowries on the ground, and from them receives a "sign," which enables him to ascertain the special puja necessary.

The Kacharis of Kamrup sometimes bury their dead, sometimes simply throw them into the jungle, and the funeral, as is generally the case amongst primitive tribes, is accompanied with a good deal of feasting. Girls are hardly ever married before they are fully grown, and

Funeral and
marriage
customs
of Kacharis.

cost from Rs. 60 to Rs. 150. If the lover cannot obtain this sum he goes to the house of his father-in-law and works for him, and after five years' labour is allowed to remove his bride. Pregnancy prior to marriage does not entail any social disability provided that the father of the child is of the same caste. If the man declines to marry his mistress he is fined a pig, but if he is willing to take her he pays the bride price or works for her in the ordinary way. Others say that an illegitimate child can only pay its way into the tribe at the cost of thirty or forty rupees' worth of rice, pork, and liquor. If the pater-nity is admitted this feast is given by the father, but, when the unfortunate girl is unable to induce her lover to acknowledge his own offspring, the maternal grandfather is held responsible.

Kalita.

The following account of the Kalitas is taken from the Census Report of 1901 :—

“There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The

Males	...	58,545	popular explanation is that Kalitas
Females	...	57,045	are Kshatriyas, who, fleeing from

the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kullupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled in Assam at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word ‘Kalita’ was originally applied to all Aryans who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional

sub-castes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the ' *hom* ' ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can intermarry with, and eat *kuchchi* with, the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nát, Suri and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stonger man of the two."

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the

position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant does not forfeit her position in society, unless her lover is of a lower caste. The Kalitas are distributed all over the district, but are not numerous north of the Gohain Kamala Ali, or near Boko in the south-west corner of Kamrup.

Kayasthas.

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners, and a considerable proportion of them earn their living as clerks or officers in the employ of Government. Kalitas who have risen above the necessity of manual labour frequently describe themselves as Kayasthas.

Males	...	...	2,348
Females	...	...	1,974

Kewats.

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose hands Brahmans will take water, and who according to Assamese ideas rank immediately after the Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats. The Jaliya, or fishing subdivision of the caste, occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common except the name Kewat or Kaibartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The Nadiyals have of recent years laid claim to the title of Jaliya Kai-

Males	...	...	21,415
Females	...	...	23,059

bartta, and the Halwa Kewats are so afraid of being in any way connected with such people or with the fishing subdivision of their own caste, that, in Barpeta, they have assumed the somewhat fanciful title of Maheshya Vaisya.

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Koches.

Males	...	...	47,210
Females	...	...	46,743

Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin, which, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur, and by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Koch king had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that, at the present day, the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste into which new converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off. The principal subdivision is the Bar Koch, who are looked upon as a clean Sudra caste, and from whose hands Brahmans will take water. The same distinction is not accorded to the Saru Koch, though they conform in most essentials to the somewhat lax standard of Hinduism exacted in Assam. Three other subdivisions are

graded in accordance with the extent to which they have forsworn the attractions of unconverted life. The Kamtali abstain from intoxicating liquor and usually from pork, the Hiremia still keep pigs but no longer indulge in the use of liquor, while the Madahi are Hindus only to the extent of having taken *saran*, and still permit themselves great freedom in all matters of food and drink.

Kumhars.

Kumhars are by tradition potters, but, like so many of the functional castes in Assam, they have to a great extent abandoned their traditional occupation in favour of agriculture.

Males	...	...	3,345
Females	...	...	3,333

Mikirs.

According to Colonel Dalton the Mikirs were originally settled in the North Cachar Hills, but were driven westward into Jaintia territory by the Kacharis. Dissatisfied with the reception accorded to them there, they sent an embassy to the Ahom governor at Raha, offering to place themselves under the protection of his master. But, as the luckless delegates were unable to make themselves understood, they were forthwith buried alive in a tank which that officer happened to be excavating. Hostilities ensued, but the Mikirs were soon suppressed, and were settled in the hills that bear their name, though a considerable colony are still to be found in South Kamrup and the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills. They are divided into four tribes Chintong, Ronghang, Amri, and Dumrali, and these tribes are again subdivided into various

Males	...	...	5,431
Females	...	...	5,162

exogamous groups. In the hills the Mikirs live by *jhum* or shifting cultivation, and raise crops of cotton, chillies, rice, and vegetables. All the members of a family live in one house, which is thus of considerable size. Their religion is of the usual animistic type, and is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits. Infant marriage is unknown and sexual license within the tribe prior to marriage is tolerated.

The Doms, or, as they prefer to call themselves, Nadi- The Nadi-
yals. yals, are the boating and

Males	...	...	5,196
Females	...	...	5,322

fishing caste of Assam. They are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of the Assamese Nadiyal, except in the following particular. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghokota* net, and in theory only sell their fish on the river's bank within a paddle's throw of the boat, whereas the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market. The Nadiyals are probably descended from the aboriginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam before the Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly in their habits and particular in their observance of the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for the objectionable name "Dom," which undoubtedly they have borne for centuries, by saying that they were the last of the Assamese to be converted from Buddhism. They are

darker in complexion than most of the Assamese, but have a good physique, and by no means uncomely faces. Their women are most prolific, and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittil Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be descended from a Brahman father and Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and inter-marry with Nadiyal girls.

**Namasudra
or Chandal.**

The Namasudras are a boating and fishing caste, said by Manu to have sprung from the union of a Brahman woman with a Sudra, and therefore to be the lowest of the low. They are a cheerful and hardworking people, but are heartily despised by their Hindu neighbours, and a degraded Brahman acts as their priest. A section of the Chandals has formed itself into a separate caste called Hira. They work as potters, but do not use the wheel, laying on the clay in strips. Many of the Chandals have now taken to agriculture as their occupation. A large proportion of the Namasudras were censused in the Hajo and Nalbari tahsils.

Males	...	...	5,370
Females	...	...	5,248

Napits.

Most of the Napits are merely a functional section of the Kalita caste. The great majority of them are cultiva-

Males	...	...	2,432
Females	...	...	2,599

tors pure and simple and have exchanged the barber's razor for the plough.

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race and appear **Rabhas.**

Males	...	...	8,039	to be an offshoot of the Garos
Females	...	...	8,302	Their language is closely akin

to Garo, and their original habitat seems to have been the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. Certain sections of the tribe, which live on the borders of that district, have no word for north and south, but describe the former idea by Bhutan, the latter by Tura, a fact which pretty clearly indicates the locality from which they originally came. Most of the Rabhas have, however, left their ancestral home and settled in Darrang, Kamrup, and Goalpara. In the last named district the bulk of the tribe are to be found south of the Brahmaputra. The Rabhas are divided into the following seven sections—Rangdania, Pati, Maitariya, Koch, Bitlia, Dahuria, Sangha. The Rangdania lay claim to a position of superiority, but inter-marriage is allowed with the Patis and Maitariyas. Inter-marriage between the first three sections and the lower subdivisions of the caste is permitted, but only on payment of a fine of about Rs.100.

The Saloi are supposed to be an offshoot from the **The Saloi.**

Males	...	...	3,637	Halwai or confectioner caste,
Females	...	...	3,789	but in Kamrup they have

taken to agriculture. They are classed as a clean Sudra caste from whose hands Brahmans can take water, and rank above the Shahas but below the Kewats.

**The Shaha
or Shau.**

The Shaha are, theoretically, a sub-caste of Sunris or liquor-sellers, and, as such, occupy a very humble position in society. But, in Kamrup, they have taken to agriculture, and have succeeded in getting accepted as a clean Sudra caste from whose hands a Brahman can take water.

Males	...	...	6,751
Females	...	...	7,329

The Totlas.

The Totlas are a superior section of the Kacharis, and occupy an intermediate position between the Kachari and the Koch. They are said to be abandoning pork and fowls as articles of food, but still take liquor.

Males	...	...	3,438
Females	...	...	3,577

Religion.

Classified by religion the population of Kamrup in 1901 was distributed in the following proportions: Hindus 69 per cent, Animistic tribes 21 per cent, and Muhammadans 9 per cent. Hindus, again, are divided into three main sects, Saktists, who devote particular attention to the reproductive powers as manifested in the female, Sivaïtes, whose special deity is Siva, as represented by the phallus, and Vaishnavites, who worship Krishna. Some account of the Saktist creed will be found in the Census Report of 1901, and more detailed information will be found in "Hindu Castes and Sects" by Babu Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya, M. A., D. L., President of the College of Pandits, Nadiya. The Saktist creed is a matter of general and not merely local importance, and need not be described at length in a District Gazetteer. In spite of the fact that Kamrup is said to have been the cradle of the Tantrik rites, and that it contains, in Kamakhya, a

shrine which occupies a position of peculiar sanctity in the estimation of the Saktist community, the Saktists in 1901 formed less than 2 per cent of the total Hindu population of the district. Sivaitism was still more poorly represented, and only 573 persons in that year professed their adherence to the special mantra of Mahadeo.

There are no less than thirty-three temples in Kamrup **Temples.** supported by grants of revenue-free or *nisfi-khiraj* land, without counting the fourteen smaller temples on the sacred hill of Nilachal, and the six temples in other parts of the district which have no regular endowment. The names of these temples, the mauzas in which they are situated, the area of their grants, the names of their founders and the date of the foundation, where known, will be found in a statement appended to this chapter. The two oldest, and by far the wealthiest and the most important, are the temples at Kamakhya and at Hajo. None of the others are known to date back further than the eighteenth century A. D., and, of the twenty-six temples for which particulars are available, no less than twelve were founded by Sib Singh, who reigned from 1714 to 1744 A. D.

Kamakhya is a place of pilgrimage visited by Hindus **Kamakhya.** from every part of India. Of all the 51 *piths*, or places at which a portion of Sati's dismembered body fell, it is probably the most interesting and important, as the relic, concealed within the penetralia of the shrine, is no less a thing than the pudenda of the goddess. A temple is said to have been first erected by Narak in the heroic

period of the Mahabharata. In the course of ages the building disappeared, and even the legend of the shrine and its associations was forgotten, and it was reserved for Viswa Singh to re-discover this holy spot. He built a temple on the hill, but it was shortly afterwards destroyed by the Muhammadan fanatic Kala Pahar. In 1565 A. D. the temple was re-built by Nar Narayan, and was consecrated by a whole hecatomb of victims, including 140 men, whose heads were offered on copper plates to the goddess.* The basement of the existing temple, which is made of hewn stone, dates back to the time of Nar Narayan, but the superstructure is of more recent date. The dome is egg-shaped and is surrounded with little turrets. The temple as a whole is in excellent repair, and is remarkable for some curious bas-reliefs inserted in the wall, and for a row of statues of considerable size around the shrine. The other buildings on the hill are comparatively modern, and most of them were re-erected by the Maharaja of Darbhanga after the earthquake of 1897.

Beauty of
the Nilachal
hill.

But, though lacking in interest to the archæologist, Kamakhya should be visited by every lover of the picturesque. A paved causeway, which tradition says was constructed by Narak thousands of years ago, stretches from the trunk road to the spur on which the temple stands. The path is steep, and the rocks have been worn to a slippery smoothness by the feet

* *Vide* the Koch kings of Kamrup, by E. A. Gait, J.A.S.B., Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

of generations of pilgrims. The sides of the hill are rocky, in places even precipitous, but, wherever they can find a foothold, the giants of the forest have driven their roots into the earth, and huge pekul and rubber trees cast their shadows over the path. At either end it passes through an archway of fine masonry, and here and there the rocks along the side have been hewn into the semblance of quaint Hindu gods. From the summit of the hill there is a magnificent view over the surrounding country. Its feet are washed by the mighty Brahmaputra, whose channel at this point is shut in by rocks on either hand. To the south there are the tumbled masses of the Khasi Hills, rising out of the alluvium as cliffs rise out of the sea, the flat and fertile valleys, with which they are intersected, forming a striking contrast to their precipitous and jungle covered sides. On the north are fields of golden rice and yellow mustard, groves of palms and feathery bamboos, surrounded and enclosed by rocky hills, while far away in the distance are the blue ranges of Bhutan and the snowy peaks beyond.

The temple at Hajo is an object of veneration to Bud-^{Hajo.}dhists as well as to Hindus. It stands on the summit of a low hill and is approached by a long flight of steps. It is said to have been originally built by Ubo Rishi, and to have been restored by the Koch king Raghu Rai in 1583. A. D., after it had been damaged by the Muhammadans. The image in the shrine is a representation of the man-lion incarnation of Vishnu, but it is worshipped by the Bhutias under the erroneous impression that it is a statue of Buddha. The exterior wall of the temple is

adorned with bas-reliefs, and a dado of elephants runs round the dome. Hajo possesses a grant of more than 12,000 acres of revenue-free land, and a staff of dancing girls, an appurtenance which is not enjoyed by any other religious institution in Assam.

Other temples.

The other temples are all built after the usual Ahom pattern, and consist of a dome enclosing the shrine approached by a small nave. The material used is thin glazed brick, burnt almost to the consistency of pottery, and the dome is generally adorned with stone bas-reliefs let into the wall. Gauhati itself is well supplied with temples. There are three, all in a more or less ruinous condition, west of the hill on which the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner stands. There is another on the island of Umananda in the middle of the Brahmaputra, while on the north bank, the temple of Aswakranta stands on a rocky promontory and is approached by a long flight of steps. Krishna, so the story goes, halted here with Rukmini, and the holes now visible in the rocks are said to have been made by his horse's hoofs. A small island near the shore also owes its origin to Krishna, who created it to screen Rukmini when bathing, from the curious eyes of the people on the further bank. A little to the east of the club are the temple and tank of Ugratara, and beyond Ujan bazar is the temple of Chhatrakar. The dome is but a small one, but the walls are seven or eight feet thick, and are composed of layer upon layer of native bricks. The most interesting temple near Gauhati is, however, the one sacred to the

;

Navagraha or nine planets. It stands on the summit of a low hill east of the town, and the roof of the dome has completely disappeared. Looking down from above on to the floor of this open cockpit, one sees the altars of the sun and moon and seven of the planets. Each is represented by a *lingum* and *jonipthi* in conjunction, and is draped with cloth and adorned with flowers by the attendant priest. Nine miles south of Gauhati is the temple of Basistha. The building itself has little to recommend it, and is in a very ruinous condition, but it stands amongst the most romantic and picturesque surroundings. It overhangs a mountain stream which comes roaring down over huge rocks and boulders, and is shut in on every side by hills. The temple was erected in 1751 A. D. in honour of the great Rishi Basistha, who is said to have spent some time in this charming valley. Rudreswar is another temple near Gauhati which has historical associations. It was erected by Sib Singh in memory of his father the great Rudra Singh, who died at Gauhati in 1714 A. D., and differs from most of the temples in the district in that it is built on a vaulted plinth.

A considerable number of Hindus did not attempt to specify their sect in 1901, but of those who committed themselves to this extent, nearly 98 per cent declared their adherence to Vaishnavism. This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Assam Census Report for 1901 :

“Sankar Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A.D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who according to tradition had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the King of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his

court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found this injunction a counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the Sattrā at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from smallpox in the neighbourhood of the Sattrā is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or 'other Vaishnavas,' as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no god but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain. Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater, and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition. Twenty-one per cent of the Vaishnavites in Kamrup in 1901 were said to be members of the Mahapurushia sect, but it would be unsafe to put much reliance on these figures.

A special feature of Vaishnavism in Assam are the *sattras*.^{sattras.} These *sattras* are small communities, resembling in some respects the monasteries of Mediæval Europe, but with this important difference that celibacy is not invariably regarded as a requisite. The central feature of the

sattra is the *namghar*, a large barn-like hall in which the people assemble for religious worship, and at the further end of which there is frequently a shrine enclosing an image of Vishnu in one of his numerous incarnations. Round this hall are ranged the houses of the resident disciples, and in Sibsagar the larger *sattras* are places of much dignity and wealth. There are no less than 56 *sattras* in Kamrup, but nearly all of them are small and unimportant. Those which are held in most respect are a branch of the great Auniati *sattra* near Gauhati, the Patbausi *sattra* near Barpeta, the Nij Patbausi and Sundaridia *sattra* in the same locality, the Chamaria *sattra* in Paschim Chamaria, the Khidirpukhri, Manpur, and Nahira *sattras* in Chayani, and the Baniyakuchi *sattra* in Sorukhetri. But all of these *sattras* are completely overshadowed by the famous institution at Barpeta.

The kirtong-
har at Bar-
peta.

The *kirtonghar* at Barpeta stands in a compound about two acres in extent. On the north and south this compound is shut in by the lines occupied by the *keolia bhokots*, or resident disciples, while on the two remaining sides it is enclosed by a brick wall. The *kirtonghar* itself is a large building, 180 ft. by 60ft., with walls of brick and roof of corrugated iron. Adjoining is the *bhojghar*, which contains two idols, the *Kolia Thakur* and the *Dol Gobinda*, which are regarded as the presiding deities of the place, and various relics of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, such as *puthis*, hair, and stones bearing the impress of their feet. An oil lamp is kept continually burning before the idols, and if it flickers or goes out it is considered to be a

sign that trouble is coming to the *sattrā*. Close by there are two small buildings called Bura Ata's *bheti*, and Badla Ata's *bheti*. Bura Ata was the first gosain who received charge of the *sattrā* from Madhab Deb. The other *bheti* is sacred from its associations with Badla Ata, the founder of the Kamalabari *sattrā* on the Majuli. The southern verandah of the *kirtonghar* is reserved for the use of the female devotees, who take part in the service but are not allowed to enter the actual hall itself.

A list of the different *sattras* in Kamrup will be found appended to this chapter. None of these institutions have, however, any considerable body of disciples, and a large proportion of the Bamunia Vaishnavites of Kamrup are the followers of the great gosains of the Majuli, whose *sattras* are described in the Gazetteer of the Sibsagar district. The disciple every year makes an offering to his gosain, which varies from four annas to one rupee a head. These sums are collected by the *medhis* or local agents of these holy men, and by them conveyed to the *sattrā*. The *medhi* is generally a person of considerable influence in the village, he is exempted from making any personal contribution, and he receives a small fee on the occasion of the burning of any of his co-disciples.

Though the Muhammadans never succeeded in retain-
ing their hold upon Kamrup for any length of time, they ^{Muhammad-}
were on more than one occasion in possession of Gauhati, ^{anism.}
and the proportion of Musalmans (9 per cent), though considerably lower than that in Goalpara, is higher than in any other district of Assam Proper. Most of them are

found in the sadr subdivision, and they are especially numerous in the four tahsils which lie opposite Gauhati, i.e., Hajo, Patidarang, Rangia and Nalbari.

**Three classes
of Muham-
madans.**

The Muhammadans of the district fall into three main classes. The *nagarias* or townsfolk are usually artizans, and those amongst them who are Assamese profess to be the survivals of Mir Jumla's invasion in 1662. They have to some extent inter-married with the people of the country, but are of comparatively pure descent, and their faith has been but little affected by Hindu superstitions. A considerable proportion of the townsfolk are, however, foreigners, who have only recently come from Bengal or Upper India. The Khalifas are supposed to be descendants of religious teachers who migrated to Assam some centuries ago. They have abandoned their original profession, which is no longer lucrative, and have taken to agriculture, but think it beneath their dignity to touch the plough or to carry a *bhar* or load affixed to two ends of a bamboo and supported on the shoulder, though they are willing to use the hoe or to carry things in bundles.

The ordinary Muhammadan villagers, who form the great mass of the adherents of that faith, are said to be fairly well acquainted with the principles of their religion. Prayers are duly said on Fridays in the more important mosques, and in some of the villages the people assemble in the open air on the occasion of the Id, after the fashion followed in the Idgarhs of the Muhammadan towns of Upper India. The fasts of Ramzan are observed in proper form, and here and there a villager is to be

found who has actually performed the pilgrimage to Mecca. They have, however, been to some extent affected by the customs of their Hindu neighbours. They believe in divination, and in the power of mantras and charms to drive away disease ; they take a bride price for their daughters, and sometimes even observe the Bihu. A few people, who are known as *jahils* or the ignorant, can hardly be described as Muhammadans at all. They take a principal part in the pujas offered to Bishahari, the goddess of snakes, and pay little attention to the teachings of their faith. Between 1891 and 1901, the Muhammadans of Kamrup decreased by 3 per cent, but this was 4 per cent less than the decrease which occurred amongst the population of the district as a whole. Conversion is said to be far from common, and it was probably immigration and superior fecundity that kept the Musalmans from decreasing as rapidly as the Hindus.

In the Hajo tahsil there are the remains of a mosque of unusual sanctity situated on the Mukamara hill. It is said to have been erected by Lutfulla Shiragi, Thanadar of Hajo, in 1657 A. D., and is known as Pao Mecca, either because a quarter of a seer of earth from that holy place was preserved in the mosque, or because a visit to this place confers one-fourth of the merit obtained from a pilgrimage to Mecca itself. Near the mosque is situated the tomb of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din. According to one account he was the founder of the mosque but died before it was completed, while another, and less likely, story has it that he was defeated and killed by the Ahoms at Bishnath, and that his body was brought to

The mosque
at Hajo.

Hajo by his vanquished soldiery. In former days Hindus and Muhammadans alike used to make offerings at the tomb, and tie a thread to a neighbouring tree or post in order to obtain the fulfilment of their prayers. The mosque was, however, demolished by the great earthquake of 1897 and has not yet been restored.

Animism.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a clear and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and the simple tribes of Bodo origin are no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking, their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. The way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small pox or cholera visits the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The untutored tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can. Twenty-

one per cent of the population in 1901 were still faithful to their simple forms of tribal faith. These animistic people are found in every part of the district, but are especially numerous in the Gauhati tahsil, where they form nearly half of the population, and in Chaygaon, Boko, Rangia, Barama and Tamulpur. In Palasbari and the central portion of the plain lying north of the Brahmaputra the proportion of these people is comparatively small.

Most of the Buddhists are either Bhutia traders who visit the plains in the cold weather, or Nepalese sawyers and herdsmen. There is, however, one Bhutia and Buddhist village within British territory, the Dewangiri, to which reference has been already made in the preceding chapter. The village stands about 1,800 feet above the level of the sea on one of the outer ranges of the Bhutan Hills. The path to it lies up the Darranga river, and, as the gorge is full of boulders, it is a somewhat trying march of from three to three and a half hours' duration from Darranga camp. The village is built on a saddle from which there is a fine view to the south over the Kamrup plain, while to the north there are ranges of forest clad mountains and the gorge of the Pagladiya. Along the ridge stand twenty tall masts, each some forty feet in height. A narrow strip of cloth, printed with Buddhist prayers, is fastened along the whole length of each mast, and cracks sharply in the wind that comes roaring up the gorge and across the ridge. In the centre of this row of masts is a

**Buddhists
Dewangiri.**

curious urn-shaped cairn, nearly twenty feet in height, that has recently been erected in Buddha's honour. The houses are small uncomfortable dwellings built on piles, with floors of wood, roofs of cane and plantain leaves, and walls of split bamboo. There is only one small room, with a little verandah in front and at the rear, and pigs, goats, and poultry scratch about beneath the chang. The whole place is dirty, squalid, and untidy, and, as the bamboo walls are full of holes, the people would suffer much from cold, were it not for the masses of filthy raiment that they wear, and the big fire place in the centre of the little room. The Bhutias *jhum* the hill sides in the neighbourhood, and raise crops of rice, maize, millets, chillies, cotton, pumpkins, sweet potatoes, and arums. They weave a considerable quantity of cloth from their home-grown cotton, and occasionally use for this purpose the fibre of a nettle which springs up round their houses. They seem, on the whole, to be fairly well to do, and are lightly taxed, as they only pay Rs. 2 per house to Government, and, in addition to this, give a cloth or two to the local representative of Bhutan. Prior to 1897, there were two other British Bhutia villages in the immediate vicinity, called Bompa and Sangduli. They were wrecked in the great earthquake, and the inhabitants started forth with all their goods and chattels to make a new home for themselves. They boldly crossed the Brahmaputra Valley and settled in the hilly country round Nongpoh, more than eighty miles away, but the place proved very unhealthy and most of the people died. The remainder decided to return once

more to the Himalaya, and founded a village in the hills beyond the frontier north of Mangaldai.

The abstract in the margin gives details for other religions which were not strongly represented in the district in 1901. The Jains are the *kaiyahs* or merchants from Rajputana, most of whom were censused in Gauhati town. Here, too, were found the Brahmos, who are recruited from the ranks of the most advanced and educated natives, and the Sikhs.

The Christian population is not large, and in 1901 was represented by 64 Europeans, 36 Eurasians, and 1,379 natives. The American Baptist Mission has a centre at Gauhati, and nearly all the natives were members of this sect. Christianity seems to be spreading slowly amongst the people. In 1881 there were only 265 converts, and at the following census 876. There is a Roman Catholic priest stationed at Gauhati, but his work for the most part lies amongst the Eurasian community.

Kamrup is a purely rural area, and though the portion of the total population supported by agriculture (81 per cent) is lower than that in any other district in the Plains, it is much above the average of the Indian Empire as a whole. The bulk of the agriculturists are peasant farmers who hold direct from Government, but, owing to the existence of large estates held by the representatives of temples and holy places, the number of tenants is unusually large, and they form about one-fourth of the cultivating classes. The preponderance of

Minor religions.

Jains	...	...	163
Sikhs	...	...	46
Brahmos	...	...	16

Occupation.

agriculture as a means of occupation is due to two causes. The district contains only two small towns, and the urban population is but $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the whole. The functional castes are, moreover, very poorly represented. Under Ahom rule the people were compelled to satisfy the various requirements of the Raja, and special crafts and industries were allotted to different groups of villagers. As soon as the pressure of necessity was withdrawn, these people abandoned the occupations which had been forced upon them and took to agriculture, which in the East is always regarded as a respectable avocation. Farm labourers, though not numerous, are not so scarce as in the upper districts of the valleys, and fishing and the priesthood afford the means of livelihood of more than 3 per cent of the total population. The number of persons who, according to the census of 1901, were dependant on charity for their support was unusually high. A large proportion of these so-called mendicants were women, many of whom were no doubt living with their relatives, and would hardly be classed as beggars in the sense in which that term is generally used.

An account of the various industries followed in the district will be found in Chapter V, and no useful purpose will be served by examining in detail the figures recorded at the census. It has now been recognized that the census tables can give but a rough and general sketch of the industrial organization of the people, and the difficulty experienced elsewhere is accentuated in Assam, where there is so little specialization of function. Most of the artizans are farmers as well as craftsmen, and there is always a

certain amount of uncertainty as to the occupation which they will return to the enumerator. In the second part of the Census Report for 1901 details will be found for the 520 different heads into which the occupations of the people were distributed. These occupations were grouped together under eight main heads, for which the following figures were recorded :—

Government 2,290 ; pasture and agriculture 479,917; personal services 6,814 ; preparation and supply of material substances 50,872 ; commerce, transport and storage 7,359 ; professions 10,950 ; unskilled labour not agricultural 6,481 ; and means of subsistence independent of occupation 24,504.

The marriage customs of Kamrup differ in some respects from those in force in Upper Assam. In Sib-sagar and Lakhimpur the custom of taking a bride price still prevails amongst the lower classes, but it is going out of fashion, and is regarded almost with abhorrence by the upper classes. In Kamrup, on the other hand, it is practically universal, and there is no caste that asks a higher price for its marriageable girls than the holy Brahman. A Brahman who has several sons will, it is said, be ruined, while one with a corresponding number of daughters is in a fair way to die rich. The community is a poor one, but in spite of this, Rs. 500 is by no means an uncommon price to ask for a Brahman girl. The contract must be made while the girl is still in her father's house, and, even if she dies before she comes to live with her husband, the price is not refunded. Not only

Marriage
customs.

has the unfortunate man to pay for a girl whose society he has never been permitted to enjoy, but he is esteemed unlucky, and on this account will probably be charged a higher price when he next attempts to provide himself with a wife.

The use of the full *hompura* rite, in which the sacred fire of mango wood is lighted and a priest employed, seems to be commoner in Kamrup than in Upper Assam.* A less imposing ritual, which is sometimes followed by the lower classes, is known as the *agchaullia*. When the bride reaches the bridegroom's house she is seated with the groom in front of a lamp and a vessel filled with rice. Their cloths are tied together, and the women of the family take up pinches of rice, wave it round their heads and throw it into the air. The bridegroom then hides a ring in a vessel which the bride has to find, and they exchange cups filled with a mixture of milk, curds, and honey. In cases where a man is unable to pay for his bride he goes to live with his prospective father-in-law and helps to cultivate his farm. This period of probation lasts for several years, but during this time the girl generally concedes to him all the privileges of a husband. The cost of a bride amongst the lower classes is generally something between Rs. 50 and Rs. 100, and there is further expenditure to be incurred on clothes, ornaments, musicians, and a feast to all the friends and relatives. In the densely populated country round Nalbari a Sudra wedding will cost as much as Rs. 200, while Rs. 1,000 is by

* A description of the *hompura* ceremony will be found on page 63 of the Assam Census Report for 1901.

no means an unusual amount for a Brahman to expend. Marriage is thus a costly undertaking, and many a man is compelled to borrow money to obtain a wife. Amongst the animistic tribes there are traces of the old *asura* form of marriage by capture, but the elopements and abductions which are comparatively common in Sibsagar are not so often met with in Kamrup.

Feasts, singing parties, and *bhaonas* or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the roadside, and, on a winter's morning, the traveller who is early abroad, frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the pleasures of the previous night. The *dol jatra*, or festival in honour of Krishna in February or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro and the people pelt one another with red powder, in memory of his amorous exploits with the milk maids of Brindaban, is observed indeed, but with much less ceremony than in other parts of India. The *Janmastami* in honour of Krishna's birth in August or September, and the *Sivaraatri* in memory of Siva in March, are kept as fasts rather than feasts. The Durga puja, and the puja of Bishahari, the goddess of snakes, are also observed by certain sections of the people.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three *Bihus*, and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik Bihu is celebrated on the last day of Asvin

(October 14th), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of God, and in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry, the people take cold food such as curds, molasses, plantains and cold rice. The Magh Bihu is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (January 14th). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw, piled round a central pole, are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day the villagers bathe, and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires, a very necessary precaution, as at this season of the year the mornings are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh Bihu is to some extent a children's festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the smaller boys, who sing, and dance, and feast in small grass huts that have been constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh Bihu, which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th), is in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice, and are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relatives, and offer them presents of cloths and other things. Buffalo fights are organized in the rice fields, but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. A game is also played with eggs in which one is banged against the other, and the egg which cracks becomes the property of the owner of the cracker. The sradh ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August—September, and that of Madhab three days before the *Janmastami*. All

work is laid aside on these two days, and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of hymns.

In the Rangia and Nalbari tahsils there is a form of **Other games.** sport called *bhateli*, which is continued for some days after the Baisakh Bihu. Each village decorates a long bamboo with flags and streamers. The one that is adjudged the best is called the bridegroom. The others, who are termed brides, are then ranged round it in a circle, and a mock marriage ceremony is performed. On the last day of the gathering the villagers dance round the bamboos, brandishing their clubs, and the best bamboo or *para*, as it is called, is planted in a tank. At the Bihu time the villagers wrestle and jump and run against one another, a special form of race being the *hankhel*, in which it is not necessarily the fastest runner who wins but the one who can go farthest without drawing breadth. In the *fatik lai* a flower is thrown amongst the crowd and each man tries to catch it, but a more amusing variety of this game is the *narkal dalua*, in which the place of the flower is taken by a greasy cocoanut. The *biskuri khel* is a form of chevy or prisoner's base.

Statement of Sattras.

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of sattra.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of sattra.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of sattra.
I.—CELIBATE GO-SAINS.		II.—MARRIED GO-SAINS—(contd.)		II.—MARRIED GO-SAINS—(contd.)	
(a) <i>Brahmans.</i>		(a) <i>Brahmans</i> —(contd.)		(a) <i>Brahmans</i> —(contd.)	
Barduar ...	Sikarhati *	Barpeta ...	Patbausi *	Dakhinbarkhetri ...	Rampur.*
Chaygeon-pantan ...	Kaimari ...	Batasgila ...	Balikaria ...	Dakhinsarubangas ...	Chapathuri.*
Ramsa ...	Auniati ...	" ...	Katra *	" ...	Guimari.*
(b) <i>Sudras.</i>	...	" ...	Khudia *	Dharmapur ...	Silampur.
Beltala ...	Tongora ...	Chayani ...	Agtala ...	" ...	Joardi.
Gaubati ...	Bartakowbari ...	" ...	Amranga *	" ...	Kaihati.*
" ...	Sarutakowbari ...	" ...	Khatismari or Maneri *	" ...	Kulbil.*
Rupasi ...	Jania *	" ...	Khidirpukhari* ...	" ...	Ulabari.*
II.—MARRIED GO-SAINS.	...	" ...	Manpur *	Khata ...	Nalbari.*
(a) <i>Brahmans.</i>	...	" ...	Nahira *	Pakoa ...	Jagra †*
Barbanger ...	Khehenipara *	" ...	Palasbari *	Pub Bajali ...	Anandapur.*

Barigog	...	Bali *	...	Chayani	...	Rajapukhuri *	...	Pub Bajali	...	Gobindapur.
"	...	Barbari *	...	Chenga	...	Harideb *	...	"	...	Haripur. *
"	...	Lasi P'istapur *	...	"	...	Jarbaradi *	...	Puschimbanbhag	...	Nilpur. *
Barpeta	...	Barpeta *	...	Dakhinbarkhetri	...	Damdama *	...	Sariha	...	Sidhapur. *
"	...	Keotkuchi *	...	"	...	Kachuya *	...	Sarukhetri	...	Badesila. *
	...		...		...		...	Sarukhetri	...	Boniakuchi. *
	...		...		...		...	"	...	Biahkuchi. *
	...		...		...		...	"	...	Parla. *
(b) Sudras.	...		...		...		...	Uparbarbhag	...	Ulabari. *
Barpeta	...	Nijatabausi *	...		...		...	Uttarbarbhag	...	Naptipara. *
"	...	Sundaridia *	...		...		...	Uttarbarbhag	...	Ronggar. *
Chayani	...	Heranda	...		...		...	Uttarbarbhag	...	
Chenga	...	Sarnai *	...		...		...	Uttarbarbhag	...	
Paschimchamarua	...	Chamarua *	...		...		...	Uttarbarbhag	...	

† A *than* at which a *shobha* is held every year.

Note.—The *sattras* marked with asterisks hold grants of land at half the ordinary rates of revenue.

Temples.

Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Name of temple.	AMOUNT OF LAND HELD.		Name of founder and date of foundation.
		Revenue free.	Half rates.	
GAUHATI SUB-DIVISION.		Bighas.	Bighas.	
Barbangsar ...	Dirgheswari ...	6,821	...	Raja Rajeswar Singh, circa 1751 A. D. Not known.
	*Madan k a m - deb.	118	...	
Beltala ...	Basistha ...	193	664	Raja Rajeswar Singh in 1751 A. D.
Dharmapur ...	Billeswar ...	1,420	2,801	Not known.
Gauhati ...	Chandra Sekhar,	...	462	Raja Chandra Kanta Singh, circa 1820 A. D.
Gauhati town,	Baneswar ...	252	1,263	Raja Chandra Kanta Singh in 1820 A. D.
	Chhatrakar ...	2,288	4,959	Raja Kamaleswar Singh, circa 1795 A. D.
	Janardan ...	1,748	2,056	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1720 A. D.
	Sukleswar ...	1,287	4,176	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1720 A. D.
	Ugratara ...	454	357	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1720 A. D.
	Umananda ...	9,664	6,017	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1720 A. D.
Hajo ...	*Jay Durga ...	567	...	Raja Lakshmi Singh in 1774 A. D.
	Madhab ...	38,098	16,308	Restored by Raja Raghu Rai in 1583 A. D.
Kharija Baranti	Chandika ...	221	...	Raja Sib Singh in 1725 A. D.
Madertola ...	*Gopeswar ...	70	532	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1725 A. D.
North Gauhati,	Aswakranta ...	1,141	4,283	Raja Sib Singh in 1721 A. D.
	Manikarnikeswar,	192	848	Not known.
	Rudreswar ...	331	2,593	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1725 A. D.
Patidarang ...	*Pingleswar ...	376	965	Not known.
Pub Kachari Mahal.	*Dipteswar ...	1,286	1,030	Unknown. Grant dates from 1764 A. D.
	*Kurma Madhab,	351	...	Unknown. Grants made to this temple by Sib Singh.

Temples.

Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Name of temple.	AMOUNT OF LAND HELD.		Name of founder and date of foundation.
		Revenue free.	Half rates.	
GAUHATI SUB-DIVISION— (concl'd.)		Bighas.	Bighas.	
Ramsa ...	Chitrachal or Nabagraha.	210	...	Raja Rajeswar Singh, circa 1750 A. D.
	Kamakhya ...	28,685	...	The foundations of the present temple were laid by Raja Nar Narayan of Kuch Bihar in 1565 A. D.
	Pandunath ...	699	789	Raja Gaurinath Singh in 1780 A. D.
Upar Barbhag (Hajo tahsil).	*Syamrai ...	...	541	Not known.
Uttar Barkhetri	*Deobaharguri...	267	...	Raja Kamaleswar Singh, circa 1795 A. D.
Uttarsara Bangswar.	*Agni Baneswar,	99	...	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1730 A. D.
	†Bhringeswar ...	500	1,727	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1730 A. D.
	†Dharieswar ...	1,732	...	Raja Sib Singh, circa 1730 A. D.
	Siddheswar ...	474	...	Raja Sib Singh, in 1723 A. D.
BARPETA SUB-DIVISION.				
Bajali ...	*Dubi or Pariharieswar.	1,280	1,760	Raja Lakshmi Singh, circa 1770 A. D.
Barpeta ...	*Basudeb ...	1,024	58	Raghunandan Chakravarty.
"	*Dakreswar ...	53	378	Madhab Ram Kalita Thakuria.

Note.—The great majority of these temples are built of brick and stone. Those marked * are kutchha buildings only, of reeds, bamboos, and thatch. At the places marked † there is no building at all. At Bhringeswar the images are placed in a cave. At Dharieswar a spring gushes continuously over the place of worship.

Statement of temples having no endowment.

Name of mauza in which situated.					Name of temple.
Ramsa	...	...	...	...	Amratakeswar.
Rupasi	...	...	...	...	Iswar Pateswari.
Chapaguri	...	...	...	...	Kujideb.
Khata	...	...	...	...	Kali.
Chaygaon	...	...	...	...	Buragosain.
North Gauhati	...	...	...	...	Kurma Janardan.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown.—Rice—Mustard and pulse—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of Molasses—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield of crops—Area of unsettled waste—General remarks—Irrigation—Live stock—Cattle disease—Grazing—Commencement of tea industry—Early days in Kamrup—Development and decline of the industry—Labour supply—Soil—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Green tea—Forests—System of management—Reserves and timber trees—System of working—List of important reserves.—

The staple food crop of the district is rice, which, in **Crops grown.** 1902-03, covered 75 per cent of the total cropped area. Other important crops are mustard, 11 per cent, and orchard and garden crops 6 per cent. A large part of the area shown under the latter head is, however, occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, occupied 4 per cent of the total cropped area, sugarcane 0.7 per cent, and tea 0.6 per cent. Wheat and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under these two crops in 1902-03 was only 14 acres. The area under the staple crops in 1901 and subsequent years will

be found in Table VII. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the different crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs:—

Rice
Sali dhan.

There are many kinds of rice, and no less than 147 different varieties have been reported from the district, but, for general purposes, the cereal is divided into three main groups, *ahu*, or early rice, *sali*, or late transplanted rice, and *baa*, or late broadcast rice, which is grown in flooded tracts. The percentage of the total area ordinarily occupied by these three classes is—*ahu* 32 per cent, *sali* 49 per cent, and *baa* 19 per cent.

Sali dhan is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*kothiatoli*) which are generally situated near the home-stead. Three different systems are in vogue for the sowing of this seed. Sometimes it is sown on high land which has been ploughed up till it has been reduced to a fine tilth but has not actually been puddled, but more usually it is sown on a bed of mud. When the land lies low and is exposed to flood a third course is adopted which consists of a combination of the other two, the seeds being first sown on a dry bed (*dhuliya*), transplanted into a puddle nursery, and finally moved once more to the field in which it is intended that they should reach maturity. Plants which have been treated in this way, or *joa kathiya* as they are called, are said to be unusually strong and to be less likely to suffer from too prolonged submersion. The ploughing of these seedling beds is begun towards the middle of March, and the seed is sown about a month later. It comes up a rich emerald green, and, at the beginning of summer, these patches of the

brightest herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to six times till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle. After the second ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water, are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site, they are often fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are from four to six weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*gosa*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, the kind of rice, and the season at which they are planted, and varies from nine inches to as much as two feet. From the middle of July to the beginning of September is the best season for transplanting paddy, and plants that are put out later generally suffer. The work is of a most arduous description, as it involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud under the rays of a burning tropical sun; and it is not to the credit of the people that they generally leave it to their womenkind. Before the end of the rains, the crop is fully grown though the ears are still empty, but about the middle of October they begin to fill, and, a few weeks later, the field turns to a rich yellow. From the end of November to the beginning of January harvesting is going on. The reapers

grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthiya*) are tied up and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary the *muthiya* are made into larger sheaves, six of them forming a *jhap*, and five or six *jhaps* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *hulabari*, or *banka*, if it is a split and therefore springy bamboo, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and is carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main divisions *lahi* and *bar*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *bar*, and though the grain is of a finer quality, the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains and are thus unfit for *bar*.

Bao dhan.

Bao dhan is sown broadcast in flooded tracts about the beginning of April, and the longest stemmed varieties, such as the *pani kekoa*, will thrive in as much as ten feet of water, provided that the floods rise gradually and do not drown the crop when the shoots are young and small. *Bao* is very largely grown in the Hajo tahsil, where it covers nearly half the total area cropped with rice, and it is also an important item in Patidarang and Palasbari. It is fairly common in Rangia, Nalbari, and Chaygaon but is naturally not much grown in the northern part of the district, where the level of the land is considerably higher than it is in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra. It is sometimes sown in conjunction with *ahu*, the earlier crop being reaped before the *bao* is ripe.

There are three different systems for the cultivation of early rice which are known respectively as *dhuliya*, *acchra*, and *kharma*; and *dhuliya ahu* is again subdivided into two varieties, *bar* and *saru*. *Saru dhuliya* is sown on land which lies too high for *sali*, and, as its name 'dusty' implies, it is grown on fields which have not been reduced to puddle. The outturn is smaller than that obtained from *sali*, but after the earthquake, when large tracts of transplanted rice land were rendered quite unculturable, the villagers were compelled, in places like Rangia, to sow the higher lands with such rice as they would grow. *Bar dhuliya* is grown on *chapori* land, where the usual procedure is as follows. In May the jungle is pressed down and burnt and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle that has sprung up in the interval is then cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojola kata*, and ploughing begins in September. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown about March and the land again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind, *butah boloah*, they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of June. The crop is, however, a precarious one and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three

Ahu saru and
bar dhuliya.

years in succession. The weeds, which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*) and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*) with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the reeds have been burned. After the third year it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clear the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop.

**Acchra and
kharma ahu.**

Acchra ahu is sown broadcast on wet land, but the seeds, instead of being sown dry, are steeped in water for a short time and kept in a cool place till they begin to germinate. *Kharma ahu* is transplanted, and the system of cultivation does not materially differ from that employed in the case of *sali*, except that it is both sown and harvested much earlier than winter rice. *Kharma ahu* is generally grown on irrigated land in the Kachari mauzas north of the Gohain Kamala Ali. *Ahu* is also sometimes sown on fields which are subsequently planted out with *sali*, but this system of double cropping exhausts the soil and is not generally resorted to. *Ahu* is not very largely grown south of the Brahmaputra except in the *chaporis* in Boko tahsil, but it covers a large area in the Rangia tahsil, and is a very important crop in Barama, Hajo, and Patidarang. In the Lamulpur tahsil, where most of it is transplanted, it is not far short of half the total area under rice, and in the Barpeta subdivision it occupies about two-fifths of the area under that important cereal.

Chapori land, from which a crop of *ahu* has been taken, is generally used when the floods subside either for pulse or mustard. Ploughing begins as soon as the land is dry, and towards the end of November the seed is scattered broadcast. Mustard sown on cold damp soil does not thrive, and if it is sown late it is liable to be attacked by insects, so that the timely subsidence of the floods is a factor of much importance in the cultivation of this crop. The plant ripens about the middle of February, and after it has been pulled is left to dry for a few days in the field before it is removed to the threshing floor. Mustard is extensively grown in the Hajo, Boko, Rangia, and Barama tahsils, the Bijni mauza and the Barpeta *chaporis*. Mustard and pulse.

Pulse is often grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra in conjunction with summer rice and mustard, but a crop is also taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chaporis* if new land is taken up the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. *Kalamah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in

the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivators. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but as the grains do not separate readily from the pods, their efforts are supplemented by a man armed with a stout bamboo. Several different kinds of pulse are grown, the commonest of all being the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo linn*), a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation, but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chaporis*.

Kala mah (*lathyrus sativus*) is a cheap pulse, but as it has a large yield it is fairly widely sown. Another variety is the lentil *masur-mah* (*lens esculenta*) which is also grown, in conjunction with mustard, on *chaporis* land from which a crop of summer rice has been already taken. The principal pulse producing tracts are to be found in the Palasbari, Rangia, and Patidarang tahsils, but very little is grown in the Barpeta subdivision.

The cultivation of jute is said to be slowly spreading up the valley, but it has not as yet made much progress in Kamrup, and in 1903-1904 the total area under this fibre was only 1,030 acres. About half of the crop was raised on the south bank, and, north of the Brahmaputra, Hajo and Rangia seem to be the only tahsils in which it is grown for sale. The seed is sown on fairly high land and the plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles and left to rot in pools of

water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use. Small patches of rhea (*Bœhmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where they are heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

The custom in Kamrup differs from that prevailing in Upper Assam, and the rice is threshed as soon as it is carried home. The sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard, and cattle are driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing the paddy is stored in huge drums, called *dhulis*, which are made of split bamboo plastered over with clay and cowdung. The rice that is required for seed is kept in loosely plaited bamboo baskets wrapped round with straw. Bundles of pulse seed are more

Storage and
threshing of
grain.

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, D.L.R. and A., showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes to thresh out 7½ maunds of paddy.

carefully protected, and the straw is well smeared over with a mixture of cowdung and mud.

**Agricultural
implements:
The plough.**

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree, or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body, which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point, which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase; the rest he makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs, as a rule, about 20 lbs., and when cattle are used the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument. When buffaloes are employed the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale, and as they are yoked not singly but in pairs, the work is so much harder that two ploughmen are required to relieve one another at short intervals.

**Other imple-
ments.**

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is

drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*dheli mari*), which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bindhu*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then removed and the pestle falls into a hole in a piece of wood sunk level with the ground in which the grain is placed. The *dheki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse, but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar (*ural*) and a pestle (*muri*); all of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown on high land near the village site, and, as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung; but, north of the Brahmaputra, it is sometimes planted out on land which is fit for transplanted rice and which is surrounded by a bank to keep out the water draining from the higher levels. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high, and has a yellow cane of a soft juicy texture. The *tehiya* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangala* or *bam*, a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds. The *mahala* is a hard and thin variety which yields comparatively little juice, and where grown is planted round the edge of the field. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dal (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The

earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between. Harvesting goes on from January to April, and during the winter nights and in the foggy mornings the drone of the sugarcane mill is heard coming across the fields in nearly every part of the district, where the "works of men" are to be seen.

The native form of mill is still often used for the ^{Preparation of molasses} extraction of the juice, but attempts have been made to introduce the iron mill, and some two or three hundred are now hired out to cultivators, the rate usually charged being a rupee a day. The native mill consists of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skilful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam

appears. The juice trickles from the trough into brass or earthen vessels, and is then transferred to a small boat, scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are generally made of iron. Two of these vessels are placed about nine feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. Sometimes all of the vessels are placed immediately over the fire, but differ considerably in size. The smaller ones boil first, and their contents is then added to the larger vessels, and so help to raise their temperature. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*ghutna*) shaped like a small dug out, and is stirred for an hour or two. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

Causes
affecting
productiveness of
land.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes, the water-supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals or shade. The first named factor is probably of most importance, as irrigated land in the submontane tracts yields bumper crops from light and sandy soil. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam, *atalatiya*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria*, and is particularly deep and soft. *Bherbheria*

land is found at the lowest part of the rice basins, and is enriched by the drainage from the village site. *Mohbeliya* is composed of fine sand and loam, and is well adapted for the growth of crops which have to be sown before the soil is moistened with the rain, as, even when dry, it does not bake very hard. *Kachua* is so stiff a clay that water makes but little impression on it, and it is only fit for the growth of *bae*, and not much good for even that. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptorisa acuta*) and *chara* (*hispa acuesceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems, and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly on evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and pushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *chara* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks, and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most

easily be destroyed there by spraying.* Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Birds such as the *kaim* and *choka* also do some damage to the rice. Rain is wanted when *sali* is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *bao*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail-storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Garden
crops. The
plantain.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognised, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *monohar*, *cheni champa* and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat smaller tree; the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead where it can obtain a plentiful

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris Green, 1 lb. freshly slaked lime or flour and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

supply of manure. The finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take from eighteen months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn into fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution distilled from the sheaths and the corm of the *athia* is often used as a spice with curry. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharpani*, is used not only as a seasoning but as a hair wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.*

The betel nut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms

Other garden crops.

* The manufacture of *kharpani* is referred to by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion. "Some of the natives dry the *kelak* plant in the sun, burn it, and collect the ashes in a white sheet which they fix on four poles. They then gradually pour water on the ashes and catch whatever percolates in a vessel below the sheet. The liquid is salt-petre like and very bitter; but they use it as salt."—J. A. S. B., Vol. LXI, Pt. 1, No. 1, 1872, page 77.

the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the Asamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and nut, which are generally eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November, they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunya*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the leaves are piled in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are spinach *pui* (*basella alba*), *lahi*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos lablab*), the common mallow *lofa* (*malva verticillata*), the raddish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka*

sag (*rumex vesicarius*), the brinjal (*solanum melongena*), *pulang*, a kind of beet-root, and *dhoniya*, whose seeds and leaves are used for curry. Potatoes are also grown extensively on the churs of the Brahmaputra.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also

		lbs.	
Sali ...	...	900	
Ahu ...	...	800	
Bao ...	...	650	
Mustard ...	...	500	
Molasses ...	...	1,900	

Yield of crops.

to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they have been grown.

The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean, and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary very materially in the different parts of the district and in different seasons. Unhusked paddy sometimes sells at the rate of 60 seers to the rupee, clean white rice sometimes fetches Rs. 2-8 the maund. Mustard generally brings the cultivator from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 per maund.

The figures in the margin show the total area of the district, as reported by the Assistant Surveyor-General, Calcutta,

	Square Miles.
Area of the district ...	3,858
Settled area ...	1,012
Area of reserved forests ...	149
Area of waste land ...	2,697

Area of unsettled waste.

the settled area, and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03, and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year. No less than 70 per cent of the

total area of the district falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this area is fit for cultivation or human habitation. The figures include the area of roads, of tracts that are permanently under water, and of hills. It also includes the area of extensive tracts which are submerged during the rainy season, and are hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It is useless to attempt to form any estimate of the proportion of the unsettled area in which cultivation could be carried on with profit, and it is hardly necessary to do so, as it is obvious that the district could support a much larger population than it now possesses. The most extensive blocks of waste land in the sadar subdivision are to be found in the Gauhati and Boko tahsils south of the Brahmaputra, which include large areas of unculturable swamps and hills, and in the Tamulpur tahsil near the Himalayas. There is, however, a marked difference in the proportion between cropped and waste land in different parts of the subdivision. In the Gauhati tahsil there are nearly five acres of unsettled waste for every acre cropped, in the Boko tahsil there are over seven, and in Tamulpur there are nearly nine. In Nalbari, on the other hand, it is quite the other way, and there are nearly three acres under crop for every acre waste, in Patidarang there are nearly two, and in Barama, Rangia, and Palasbari the proportions are far from being equal. In the Barpeta subdivision as a whole the proportion of Government waste to cropped land is more than two to one, and in the Paka mauza it is

no less than sixteen to one. A large proportion of this waste land is, however, at present quite unfit for cultivation. Bagribari, Soriha, Uttar Bajali, Pub Bajali, and Manikpur are the mauzas in which there is relatively the smallest quantity of unsettled waste. Table XV A shows the area of unsettled waste in each tahsil or mauza.

Manure is seldom used except for sugarcane, garden crops, and very occasionally for mustard. Agriculture sustained a serious blow after the earthquake of 1897. Much of the best rice land was damaged by deposits of sand, and still more by the silting up of the drainage channels. The area under mustard was materially reduced, and as yet no new crops have been introduced to take its place. The cultivation of jute is extending, but very slowly. Wheat has been tried as an experiment in the Hajo tahsil and the Paka mauza, but it is too early yet to say whether it will be adopted on a commercial scale.

General
remarks.

In the submontane tracts the fields are irrigated by water drawn from the hill streams, and this enables the villagers to raise bumper crops from comparatively poor and sandy soil. The following description of these irrigation works is taken from a note by Mr. Barnes, the Settlement Officer :—

“ The *modus operandi* in their construction is to dam a stream several miles above the point at which the water-supply is required. The dam is called *bundh* ; at the dam a side channel (*muguri*) is left for the passage of boats: from above the dam a channel (*dong*) is constructed to lead the water to the particular area which it is proposed to irrigate. Where water is required for any particular field, a cut (*bolom*) of the requisite depth is made in

the side of the *dong*, and, finally, if there is an excess of water, a channel (*ulta dong*) is made to convey the surplus into some adjacent river. Some of these channels are over seven miles in length, and they are frequently subdivided. In one case one channel is carried across another by a wooden trough. They vary in breadth and depth, but are ordinarily about six feet broad and four feet deep. The total length of irrigation channels in the Bajali tahsil is approximately 50 miles. They are constructed by voluntary labour, any absentee paying Re. 1 to the village common fund. Frequently several villages combine to construct a channel."

The existence of these irrigation works renders the position of the cultivator unusually secure, and this fact is now for the first time being taken into account in the assessment of the district.

Damage
done by
flood.

Prior to 1897, most of the drainage of the district was collected in the Chaulkhoa river, and was carried into the Manas, and so into the Brahmaputra. For the greater part of its course the Chaulkhoa flows westward parallel to that great river, and it was connected with it by several channels, which carried off the flood water, and allowed the land to dry in time for the sowing of the mustard crop. After the earthquake, the Chaulkhoa, the Saru Manas, and the Kaldiya, two rivers which fall into the Chaulkhoa near Barpeta, were all silted up, and the emergency channels to the Brahmaputra were choked with sand, with the result that the country from the neighbourhood of Hajo to Barpeta became water logged.

Matters began gradually to right themselves as the rivers began to scour away their beds, but progress was naturally slow. The raiyats were, however, induced to combine to re-excavate four channels from the Chaulkhoa to the Brahmaputra, called the Kukuajan, the Phuta,

Baralia, the Moamarijan, and the Borsolijan, while the Public Works Department cleared the Chaulkhoa itself, as far as Bijlighat, and a portion of the Kaldiya. Further east the Dharmapur mauza was flooded by the water of the Pagla Diya river, which changed its course and came down the Bura Diya. The Public Works Department accordingly turned the river still further east into a channel of the Noa Nadi, which had formed after the earthquake, and conducted it by this route into a *bil* near Bijlighat, from which it escapes into the Chaulkhoa, and so into the Brahmaputra.

The portions of the sadr subdivision which at present suffer most severely from flood are the Dharmapur mauza, the northern portions of Uttar and Dakhin Barkhetri and Ramdia mauzas, and the northern and western portion of Hajo mauza. The whole of this area is one vast sheet of water in the rains, and many of the villages are built on what are virtually small islands. In the Barpeta subdivision the Paka mauza, and a portion of Sarukhetri, Bhawanipur, Dakhin Bajali, Manikpur, and Hastinapur are all exposed to serious floods.

The buffaloes of the district belong to two distinct **Live stock** breeds, the Assamese and the Bengali. The Assamese **Buffaloes.** are the larger of the two, and are fine upstanding animals with widely spreading horns. During the cold weather they are generally grazed in jungly tracts, and a wild bull often attaches himself to the herd, and becomes the sire of many of the calves. This continual infusion of a good strain of blood does much to maintain the

excellence of the breed. The Bengali buffalo is a smaller and less imposing animal, and does not command so high a price, a bull costing from Rs. 12 to Rs. 25 and a cow from Rs. 20 to Rs. 60. The Assamese or *kacor* animals are more expensive. The *dunosla* or cross breeds from the two main stocks occupy an intermediate position both as regards value and price.

Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portions of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half naked boy, whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides, and who guides it with a nose rope. In the *chaporis* the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputra which separates them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too, as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a simul tree, which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home. At night each animal is fastened by a nose rope to a post, and sleeps on the bare ground. The professional graziers are generally Nepalese, and they keep their buffaloes in the *bils* and marshy tracts that fringe the Brahmaputra, or on the high grassy plains at the foot of the Himalaya. A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every

day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white and rich in fatty materials, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years, during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth.

Half starved, under sized, ill bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly, perhaps, in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. No bulls are set aside to be the sires of the herd, and the cows are generally covered by a young and immature animal, who secures the object of his desires by his superior lightness and agility. The sire is often closely related to the dam, and she in her turn has had her strength exhausted by being covered when herself little more than a calf, and by subsequent breeding without the smallest intermission. The cattle are never groomed, and when an epidemic breaks out no attempt is made to isolate the sick. "Everything," as Mr. Darrah* says, "is left to nature, from the moment when the most active, and therefore probably the youngest,

Cattle.

*The information given in these paragraphs is taken from a note compiled by Mr. Darrah, Director of Land Records and Agriculture, in 1887, and from reports received from the Tahsildars and Mauzadars in Kamrup.

bull of the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, until the progeny, after years of work and semi-starvation, dies neglected in some unfrequented jungle." If nasty they have at any rate the merit of being cheap, and cows generally cost from Rs. 8 to Rs. 15, bullocks, which are usually castrated when three years old, from Rs. 10 to Rs. 25. The cattle brought down by the Bhutias in the cold weather are, however, a very different class of animal, and are almost as large as the well known Alderney breed. Unfortunately their numbers are not sufficient to produce any perceptible effect upon the cattle of the district as a whole, and the bullocks do not stand the heat very well.

Goats and
sheep and
ponies.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small outhouse with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform as a protection against jackals.

Sheep are brought down by the Bhutias in the winter, but, if the figures of the cattle census are correct, the total number in the district is extremely small.

The Bhutia ponies are seldom more than twelve hands high and are shaggy little animals with no manners but considerable staying powers. Thanks to the existence of this breed the country ponies of Kamrup are not quite as miserable creatures as the ones that are usually to be seen in Upper Assam.

The following figures show the number of animals in the district as ascertained at a census taken in 1899 :—
Bulls and bullocks 196,000 ; cows 148,000 ; bull buffaloes 3,000 ; cow buffaloes 8,000 ; young stock 182,000 ; sheep 82 ; goats 63,000.

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent in the district are foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhæa, (*marki*), cholera, *matikhua*, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna*, when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight. Cattle disease.

During the winter cattle are grazed on the stubble left in the fields, on high land that is lying waste, and in swamps and marshes. In the rains they have to be pastured on high land between the rice fields, and in the more densely settled portions of the district there is a dearth of grazing ground. The villagers here either feed their animals on rice straw or on grass brought from a distance, and the poor feeding in the rains has possibly something to do with the miserable condition of the cattle. Grazing.

The tea industry, which bulks so largely in the commercial development of Tezpur and Lakhimpur, is of comparatively small importance in Kamrup. The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had been engaged in trade in the Commencement of tea industry.

province while it was still under native rule, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gunboats in 1824*. In 1834, a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their members, Drs. Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths, to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were established, a small establishment was entertained under the general management of Mr. Bruce to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea and cultivate them when discovered, and plants and seed were brought from China. Tea makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and in the following year some of the manufactured product was sent to England and met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which at the present day seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid ranging from 16s. to £ 1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1-10½ d. to 2s. a lb.

**Early days
in Kamrup.**

The pioneer of tea in Kamrup was Mr. W. Robinson, of the Education Department, who has been sometimes called the historian of Assam. In 1853, he took up a small grant

*Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from :—

- (1) Papers regarding the tea industry in Bengal, Calcutta, 1873.
- (2) Selections from the records of the Government of Bengal No. XXXVII papers relating to tea cultivation in Assam, Calcutta, 1861.
- (3) Report of the commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospect of tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet, Calcutta, 1868.

of 155 acres at Phatasil in the Ramsa pargana, which five years later was said to yield some 12 maunds of tea. There was a general impression that the plant would not do as well in Kamrup as in Upper Assam, an impression which has unfortunately been justified, and Colonel Jenkins' prognostications, that though the shrub might not grow so luxuriantly it would yield sufficient produce to make the cultivation reasonably remunerative, have hardly been fulfilled. The first gardens were opened out on the low hills in the neighbourhood of Gauhati. The situation is extremely picturesque, but the yield is small, as when the jungle is cleared the soil is washed away from the steep slopes and the roots of the bushes are exposed.

In 1859 there were ten grants in Kamrup, which covered an area of 12,207 acres, but over 9,000 acres out of this total were included in a single grant held by Mr. Becher at Barduar. It is, moreover, doubtful whether this figure was correct, as in 1872 the Barduar grant was said to contain only 4,737 acres. The area under cultivation was reported to be 297 acres and the yield some 6,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. In the early sixties the industry passed through serious vicissitudes due to over speculation, but it was never at any time of sufficient importance in Kamrup for its success or failure to leave much impression upon the general condition of the district.

In 1872, there were 15 plantations with 1,500 acres of mature plant, which yielded 278,000 lbs. of manufactured

tea. Ten years later there were no less than 101 so called gardens, but most of them were but tiny patches of land, as the total area under mature plant was only 5,286 acres and the yield 951,000 lbs. of tea. The maximum area under mature plant according to the returns was reached in 1889, when 6,057 acres, which were distributed over 89 gardens, yielded 1,164,000 lbs. of tea. From that time onward the industry has steadily declined. The fall in prices rendered it impossible for small gardens, which suffered from special disadvantages of soil, rainfall, and inferiority of plant, to compete with the large estates which had been opened out on more fertile land in other parts of India. In 1900, there were only 22 gardens in the district, with 3,717 acres of mature plant, which yielded 768,000 lbs. of tea. Details for later years will be found in Table VII and for each of the gardens in Appendix A.

**Labour
supply.**

The industry is largely worked by local labour, but it has to be supplemented by importation from other parts of India: 2,674 coolies with their dependants were imported in the ten years ending with 1890, and 3,704 in the next decade. In spite of this nearly half of the population censused on the plantations in 1901 (5,828) had been born in the Kamrup district.

Soil.

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of waterlogging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which in its natural state is covered with tree forest is usually con-

sidered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is deficient.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised, Varieties of plant.
Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in width, Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety, Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the Naga indigenous, which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety.

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January, and kept under shade till the young plants are System of cultivation.

three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year, only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning and any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. As an extreme remedy old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of eight or nine inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes of temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are occasionally spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top-dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable, and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view.

Plucking begins in April and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks' time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a flush, and there are usually five or six full flushes in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The Pests and the Blights of the Tea Plant," by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 20 hours, but if it is cold and wet from 30 to 40 hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about 40 minutes, and after this the leaf is placed in a cool room for about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees

System of
manufac-
ture.

of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass, are orange pekoe, broken pekoe, souchong, and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

Green tea.

Of recent years an attempt has been made to introduce the manufacture of green tea in order to meet the demands of the American market. In 1902, the Indian Tea Association offered a bounty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas on every pound of green tea manufactured. The following year this bounty was reduced by half and over 60,000 pounds of green tea were exported from Kamrup. The principal difference between the manufacture of green and black tea is that the former article is not fermented. As soon as the leaf comes in it is steamed in a drum for about half a minute, a process which turns it a bright green colour, and effectually stops all fermentation. Excess moisture is then removed by a hydro-extractor or centrifugal machine, and it is then rolled, fired, and sorted into the following different

grades—pin head, gunpowder, young hyson, hyson No. I, hyson No. II, twanky and dust. The infused leaf should be of a bright green colour, and the liquor of a very pale yellow shade. Most of this tea is sent to North America, but a small quantity is sold in the mid-lands counties of England.

The forests of Kamrup fall into two main classes, the **Forests.** reserved forests, which in 1902-03 covered an area of 149 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which in the same year occupied the enormous area of 2,306 square miles. Unclassified state forest is, however, simply Government waste land, and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy *chur*, or a huge expanse of low-lying land covered with high grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land which has been resigned by its former holder and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, actual tree forest. It is impossible to give even the roughest estimate of the proportion of unclassified state forest which is under timber, but, where the total area is so enormous, it is obvious that, in a country with a heavy rainfall like Assam, the area covered with trees must be considerable.

The management of the Government forests is general- **System of**
ly entrusted to a Deputy or Assistant Conservator, but the **manage-**
unclassified state forests are under the immediate control **ment.**
of the local revenue officials. Settlement holders are

allowed to remove all minor forest produce, including unreserved trees, which is needed for their own purposes free of royalty.

**Reserves
and timber
trees.**

There are altogether 29 reserved forests in Kamrup, but there are only three, the Pantan, Rani, and Barduar, which cover an area of more than ten square miles. The other forests are for the most part isolated hills or other small patches of land covered with sal, and, with the exception of the reserves at Hajo and Darranga, they are all situated south of the Brahmaputra near the outskirts of the Assam range. No detailed description of growing stock has yet been made, but it is thought that about two-fifths of the total area is under sal (*shorea robusta*), and that the remainder consists of equal proportions of green forest, bamboos, and grass jungle. The most valuable timber tree in the district, with the exception of teak, of which there is a small artificial plantation at Kulsi, is sal. Other good trees are sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), titasapa (*michelia champaca*), ajhar (*lagerstræmia flos reginæ*), amari (*amoora spectabilis*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), khakan (*duabanga soneratioides*), makria (*schima molois*), paroli (*sterenspermum chelonoides*), koroi (*albizzia procera*) and labu (*ficusisoraphii*).

**System of
working.**

Trees which are converted into dugout canoes are generally hollowed out in the forest and carried to the nearest river or dragged to the nearest road and carted. They are then taken to the sale depôts at Loharghat, Kulsi, Boko, and Singra, where they are purchased by local traders, who re-sell them at Goalpara,

or to Bengalis, who take them down to Mymensingh and Dacca. Sleepers and planks are generally sawn up in the forest by hand, but there is one small mill at Barduar. Logs known as *dhums*, which are generally sawn up into lengths of from six to twelve feet, are exported to Bengal for boat building. They are floated down the Kulsi, Batha, Boko and other rivers, but, in the case of sal and other heavy timber, the logs have to be attached to boats, as their specific gravity is greater than that of water.

The principal centres of trade are Kukurmara and Nagarbari for logs, Loharghat, Kulsi, Boko, and Singra for boats, Palasbari for sleepers, and Gauhati for building materials. The deciduous forest is protected, and generally successfully protected, from fire during the dry season. Figures showing the percentage successfully protected and the cost will be found in Table IX, which also contains figures showing the outturn from reserved and unclassified forests and the receipts and expenditure of the Department. There is one artificial plantation maintained by the Department on the Kulsi, where there are 163 acres under rubber (*ficus elastica*) and 300 acres under teak (*tectona grandis*).

List of Forest reserves ten square miles and more in area.

Name of reserve.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in square miles.	Date of constitution.	Route for extraction of produce and market centres.
Pantan ...	Situated on the west bank of the Kulsi river opposite to Barduar reserve in the Bajai mauza of the Chaygaon tahsil. For the most part steep and rugged hills of crystalline rock with a covering of sandy loam. In the valleys a rich loam with vegetable mould on the surface.	34	1878	The timber is extracted by the Kulsi river and taken to Kulsi, Kukurmara, and Palasbari sale depots.
Barduar ...	The reserve is situated on either side of the Kulsi. Throughout the level portion of the reserve the soil is a sandy loam of great depth, and where it is not swampy is well adapted for the growth of sal.	25	Do.	The timber is brought down the Batha and Kulsi rivers to Kukurmara and Palasbari.
Rani ...	The reserve is divided into two blocks situated on the northern face of the Khasi Hills in Rani mauza. Both blocks consist entirely of hills of granitic rock with sandy loam as surface soil. The hills are not precipitous nor are there any surface boulders excepting in some places. The soil is mostly deep and capable of producing a very superior growth of sal.	17	1882	Lines of export.—The Jaglunadi for the southern and western portions of block I, for the rest the Kalmani, Khana, and Bharadu rivers and the Dipar <i>bil</i> . The timber is taken to Kukurmara and Palasbari.

CHAPTER V. INDUSTRIES.

Arts and industries—Weaving—Silk—Pottery—Metal utensils—
Mat-making—Lac—Fishing.

The arts and industries of Kamrup are not of very much importance as the Assamese have little aptitude for handicrafts. In the days of native rule a certain proportion of the people were compelled to satisfy the varied wants of the Raja and his nobles, but, when the pressure of necessity was removed, they sank back into the great mass of agriculturists from which they were being gradually evolved. Many of the animistic tribes earn the ready cash required to pay their revenue by rearing silk-worms, and much of the clothing that the people wear is woven by the women of the family. A certain quantity of pottery and of brass and bell-metal utensils is turned out ; mats are made and lac is grown for export. Blacksmiths forge daos, ploughshares, and knives, and oil is expressed by the bullock mills of Upper India, but, generally speaking, the industries of Kamrup are in a very undeveloped state. Recently a step has been taken in the right direction, and an attempt has been made to work up the raw material of the district locally instead of exporting it in the crude state to Calcutta. Two steam mills have been opened in Gauhati. The larger of the two deals solely with mustard oil, and has a daily outturn of 1,200 gallons. In the other flour is ground

Arts and Industries.

and cotton ginned by steam, and a certain quantity of mustard oil expressed.

Weaving.

The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, the material employed is generally imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shopkeeper. The framework of the loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5 ft. 10 in. by 2 ft. 6 in. and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam" published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is about ten rupees, and, as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home-made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very little cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *churias* or waistcloths, large sheets or shawls worn as wraps called *chadar* or *bor kapor*, and smaller shawls called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called

paridiu kapor is very finely made, and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200. Of recent years the use of imported clothing has been coming into favour, an innovation which has little to recommend it, as the time formerly spent at the loom is not as a rule assigned to any other useful occupation.

Only two kinds of silk are produced in Kamrup, *eri* and *silk muga*, as the *pat* worm (*bombyx textor*) is no longer reared. The *muga* worm (*antheroea assama*) is generally fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*). Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in Kamrup the only broods commonly reared are the *katia* in October—November, and the *jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males who are allowed to remain at liberty. Each female produces about 250 eggs, which are kept in a dark place, and when the worms appear they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats, and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger. In colour it is green with a brown and yellow

stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin they descend the tree and are then removed to the house. *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use, and very little is produced for sale. The principal centres of cultivation are Dimaria, Beltala, Panbari, Rani, Barduar, Chaygaon, Pantan, Upper Banbhag, and Patidarang. The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of which yield one oz. of thread. The price obtained is about Rs. 9 per seer.

Eri silk.

The *eri* worm (*attacus icini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As with the *muga* moth, the females when they emerge are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun, not reeled. Before this is done

the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three-quarters of their weight in thread.

Only Brahmans, Ganaks, and Kalitas are actually debarred from the rearing of the *eri* worm, but as a matter of fact the industry is largely in the hands of the animistic tribes, such as the Garos, Mikirs and Kacharis. The principal centres of manufacture are in the Barduar Chaygaon, and Pantan mauzas and the Tamulpur and Barama tahsils, and the most important markets are at Rangia, Barama, Palasbari, and Tamulpur. Large quantities of the cloth are purchased by the Marwari merchants for export to Calcutta.

The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bor kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats.

Rough pottery is made by Kumhars, who are often a **Pottery** functional section of the Kalitas, and by Hiras, a section of the Namasudras. There are probably about 7,000 persons in the district who are to a greater or a less degree dependent on the making and selling of earthenware for their means of livelihood, but a large proportion of these people are agriculturists as well. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances, and if it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with

it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are the wheel (*chak*), which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin about 16 inches long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*) and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*ekathia*, *mola*, *daskathia* and *charu*), water jars (*kalah*, *tekeli* and *thali*), and larger vessels (*hari* and *jangu*), with lamps, pipes and drums. Flower pots are manufactured at Gauhati by up-countrymen, and earthenware pipes for ring wells at Barpeta. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by the metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry

are at Paru, Hirapara (near Palasbari), Rani, Beltala, Durakahara and Khehenipara.

The brass and bell-metal industry is not of much importance. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal, which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, and borax is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota, bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi gagari*), trays (*sarai* and *botas*), boxes to carry betel nut and lime (*tema, temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*). The chief centres of the brass industry are at Hajo and Gauhati, and of the bell-metal trade at Sarthai-bari. The blacksmith's work is of a very simple character, and they only make ploughshares, billhooks or daos. knives, and sickles. Ornaments of gold filigree of really artistic workmanship and design are manufactured at Barpeta.

Metal utensils.

Mats are made from bamboo, *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*). Mat making.

hi), *patidoia* (*maranta dichotoma*), cane (*calamus* sp.), *mutha* (*cyperus rotundus*), and *sola* (*aeschomyna aspera*). Mats made of the first four materials are plaited by hand, but if *mutha* or *sola* is employed strips of the reed are placed in wooden frames and the mat is woven almost as though it were a cloth. Bamboo mats are made in the Gauhati, Palasbari, and Bajali tahsils and cost from As. 2 to As. 8. *Mutha* and pith mats are made in Chamaria, Chaygaon, Hajo, and Patidarang and cost from As. 4 to Rs. 5. Bamboo sieves are also made in Palasbari and Chaygaon and cost from As. 2 to As. 8.

Lac.

Most of the lac produced in Kamrup comes from the part of the district which lies south of the Brahmaputra and west of Gauhati. The Garos generally rear their lac on the arhar plant (*cajanus Indicus*), while the Assamese prefer some kind of *ficus* or the *kukursola* (*grexia multiflora*) or *moj* (*albizzia lucida*), but, as far as is known, the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which the insect has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months, and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to 2 maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first

being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed, and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Almost all the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac. Shellac, when made, is prepared in the following manner. The stick lac is pounded and sifted, and then repeatedly washed and dried to free it from all tinctorial matter. When the desired result has been obtained the resin is put into a bag and heated over a slow fire. The bag is squeezed till the melted lac is forced through the cloth, and it is then scraped off and is ready for the market. Sometimes the raw product is treated by a much simpler process, and the stick lac is merely boiled for some hours and then pressed into cakes, which contain of course the whole of the colouring matter. A dye is also prepared by pounding the stick lac into a fine powder, mixing it with water in the proportion of one to four and boiling it for two hours. The tinctorial matter is then strained off and the refuse, which is known as *shera*, is exported.

The fishing industry is of considerable importance in Kamrup. There are in the district about 21,000 members of the Nadiyal and Namasudra castes who are allowed by custom to catch fish for sale, and probably more than half of these depend to some extent at any rate upon their nets for their means of livelihood. The Fishing.

right of fishing in the more important rivers and *bils* is every year put up to auction and fetches between twenty and thirty thousand rupees a year. (For details see Table XIV.) There are altogether 145 fisheries in the district, the most valuable mahals being the Brahmaputra, the Chaulkhoa and Bnelengi rivers, and the Jahna, Kukurmara, and Janparia *bils* in Barpeta. Fish is not salted in Kamrup, but there is a certain amount of trade in dried fish which goes from the Barpeta and Chenga mauzas to Bengal, and from the country south of the Brahmaputra to the Garo and Khasi Hills. The lessees of the Brahmaputra fisheries levy a tax of Rs. 2 or Rs. 3 on each net used, and in the case of large nets like the *lanqi*, which are worked by several men, a tax of Rs. 3 per annum on each man. The best eating fish are hilsa (*clupea ilisha*), roe (*labeo rohita*), chital (*notopterus chitala*), ari (*arius*), magur (*clarius magur*), and pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*).

Nets used.

The following are the nets most commonly in use:—(1) *Ghakata*, a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water and is generally used to catch *butchua* fish. (2) *Khewali*, a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached while all round the edges there are weights. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides of the net together. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank. The following names are applied to this net as the mesh decreases in size—*sayani*, *pachani*, *afalia*, *angtha*, *ghanjal*. (3) *Langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the

top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *tenga langi* is a smaller variety, the two ends of which are brought round to form a circle as the net is not long enough to reach across the river. (4) *Parangi*, a square net the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout pole to which the bamboos are attached and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. The *polo* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wicker-work. It is generally used by women, who walk through shallow water and keep pressing the rim of the glass on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *jutuki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *jukai* is a species of wicker-work shovel which like the *polo* is generally used by women. They place the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps, which are called *dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa*, and *gui* and are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

CHAPTER VI.

CONDITION OF PEOPLE—COMMUNICATIONS—TRADE.

Sub-tenancy—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of the people—Conventional restrictions—Development of steam navigation—Railways—Roads—Water communications—Post and telegraph—Trade—Fairs—Towns—Local Boards.

Sub-tenancy. There are large *nisfi-khiraj* and *lakhiraj** estates in Kamrup, and the area of land sublet is considerably larger than it is in the upper districts of the valley. At the last settlement statistics of sub-tenancy were collected for nearly nine-tenths of the total settled area; and it was found that nearly 25 per cent of the land with regard to which information

	Per cent.
Bajali	... 28
Bangsa	... 36
Barbhag	... 30
Barpeta	... 10
Baska	... 14
Bijni	... 8
Chamaria	... 3
Patidarang	... 35
Ramdia Chapari	... 7
South Bank	... 20

was recorded, was occupied by tenants. The proportion returned for each of the groups into which the district was divided is shown in the statement in the margin. No rent law has as yet been introduced, as it is thought that in a comparatively sparsely peopled district like Kamrup there is not much danger of rack renting. Rents are paid either in cash or kind, or by a

* *Nisfi-khiraj* estates pay half the ordinary rates of revenue, *lakhiraj* estates are revenue free. The history of these estates will be found in Chapter VII.

combination of the two systems. Of grain rents there are several varieties. Tenants holding land on the *adhi* tenure hand their landlord half the actual produce of the fields; whereas, in the case of *chukti adhi*, a fixed quantity of grain is given irrespective of the total yield. Sometimes the crop is divided before it is threshed (*dal adhi*), sometimes after (*guri adhi*). In the case of cash rents the Government revenue is the rate ordinarily charged, but the land is usually measured up with a rod that is only $7\frac{1}{2}$ or 7 cubits in length instead of the standard measurement of 8 cubits. This in itself gives the landlord a profit of 5 or 30 per cent, and, in addition to this, he often either levies cesses on his tenants, or requires them to work for a certain time in his own fields. Typical cesses are *salumi* from 8 annas to Rs. 2; camp expenditure 6 annas; and contributions towards the cost of weddings or pujas.

The ordinary daily wage is said to be four or five annas Wages. a day. There is no regular landless labouring class, but since the earthquake of 1897 it is not so difficult to obtain labour as it was. Ploughmen are sometimes paid in grain, and sometimes are allowed to use their employers' bullocks in their own fields for one day out of every three. The villagers often combine to help one another to get in the harvest, the owner of the field rewarding his assistants by a good meal. Servants hired by the month receive from Re. 1 to Rs. 7 as wages. In many cases these men are what is known as *bandhas*. A man who is in need of ready cash receives a lump sum down, and enters into an agreement to work for his creditor till the full amount

has been redeemed. He is fed and clothed, and each year's labour is usually set against a certain portion of the advance. Occasionally it is only set against the interest, and, where this is the case, the loan can never be worked off. These *bandhas* are usually very kindly treated, and it is obvious that, if they choose to leave their masters, a civil suit for the balance of the sum due affords a very insufficient remedy, as such a person is not likely to have any property from which it would be possible to satisfy the civil court's decree.

Prices.

Year.	Seers per rupee.	common rice at Gauhati in
1863	23	certain selected years since 1863,
1866	12	it will be seen that, though there
1872	23	has been a general tendency to-
1879	11	wards a rise in price, it has not
1888	20	been very marked and has been
1897	9	
1900	16	

subject to striking variations. The average price recorded for each of the four decades ending with 1902 was 17·3 ; 15·5 ; 16 ; and 12·5 seers for a rupee. The high average during the last decade was largely due to famine in India and several poor harvests in Kamrup. The prices obtained by the raiyats for their surplus produce vary very considerably in different parts of the district. At Rangia, the price paid for ordinary white rice seldom falls below Rs. 2 per maund, even at harvest time, but in less accessible localities the price is sometimes very low. In Bajali, unhusked rice sells at about 40 to 45 seers for the rupee on the river bank near the trader's boat ; but the price falls in direct proportion to the distance from which

the boatmen have to carry the grain. In some villages the rate is as low as 60 seers for the rupee and occasionally even less than this, but the owners could always obtain the higher price if they chose to carry their produce down to the boats themselves. Prices such as these are low enough, but the profits of the boatmen, who purchase the rice in the mofussil and sell it again in Barpeta or Gauhati, do not appear to be excessive.

Mustard generally brings the raiyat about Rs. 3 per maund. The price of salt has fallen during the last quarter of a century, and so has that of pulse, though not to a very marked degree. Table X shows the price of common rice, pulse, and salt recorded at Barpeta and Gauhati in 1880, 1890, 1900, and subsequent years.

The staple food of the people is boiled rice, eaten with **Food.** pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi* which is not very largely used. Goats' flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, and is frequently procurable, especially in times of flood, when the deer are driven on to islets of higher land and are ruthlessly slaughtered from boats. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and *ghi*.

The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton **Dress.** *dhoti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper, and

sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a scarf tied round the bust, and a shawl. These clothes used originally to be all home made, but of recent years imported fabrics have been largely coming into favour. Cheap woollen blankets are also worn in the cold weather, a fashion that has much to recommend it as the Assamese are often very lightly clad in winter. Silk is not as generally worn as in Upper Assam, and the women do not seem to have as much jewellery as their sisters in Sibsagar. Boots and shoes are the exception, and in their own homes even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp-pointed grass.

Dwellings.

The house of the ordinary villager consists of three or four small and ill-ventilated rooms, built round three sides of a court-yard. The walls are usually made of reeds plastered over with mud, the roof of thatch supported on bamboos, the floor of mud. In Kamrup, the enclosure is often entered through a little room intended for the reception of guests, a refinement which is seldom seen in the homestead of the ordinary villager further up the valley. The materials required for the construction of a house do not, as a rule, cost the proprietor anything but the labour of procuring them ; but the houses are small and generally badly built. The furniture of the cultivating classes is simple, and consists of a few boxes and wicker-work stools, brass and bell-metal cooking utensils, earthen pots and pans, baskets and bottles, and perhaps a loom. The villager sometimes sleeps on a

small bamboo *machan* or platform, sometimes on a mat on the floor, but the middle classes have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses.

The local revenue officials are of opinion that a considerable proportion of the people are in debt ; but it is doubtful whether this indebtedness is serious, as, apart from the standing crop, the poorer raiyats have no security to offer. The rate of interest charged is said to vary from 10 to 75 per cent, but for small loans it is generally either one anna or two pice in the rupee per mensem. The Settlement Officer (Mr. Barnes) seems to be of opinion that there is little genuine poverty in Kamrup. Of the Bajali group, which is certainly not the richest part of the district, he says that, though the ordinary raiyat is poor, he is able to maintain himself on his land in independance and without difficulty. Cash is generally scarce and little grain is stored, but this is hardly matter for surprise as the people seem to take life fairly easily. Of the Barbhag group, which has a density of 521 to the square mile, the Settlement Officer writes as follows:—" The landlords are on the whole fairly well off, though there are very few wealthy men amongst them. They were undoubtedly rather hard hit by the sudden rise in the demand in 1893-94, though they can well afford to pay. The Brahmans and Ganaks have other sources of income besides agriculture. The independent cultivators in the good villages are generally well off but without much money. In the bad villages they are distinctly poor, and have generally come down in the world owing to the deterioration of their land. They spend large sums

Economic condition of the people.

on marriage; a Brahman's marriage is said to cost between Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 1,200 and that of a Sudra not less than Rs. 200. A certain amount of debt is the result." In the south of the Patidarang group the conditions are said to be much the same as those in the Barbhag group, but in the north of Panduri, the south of Kaurbaha, and the north of Pub Kachari Mahal the raiyats are described as "distinctly poor." The people obtain the cash they require to pay their land revenue by the sale of surplus dhan, mustard, and pulse, garden produce, *eri* cloth and thread, and lac. The Brahmans earn considerable sums by going to Bengal as priests, and at the other end of the social scale are the Kacharis, who earn almost as much by working on the tea gardens. A certain number of people work on the roads for the Public Works Department or the Local Board, while others hollow out canoes for sale. The villagers are, however, probably not so well to do as those of Upper Assam, where the tea industry puts an enormous amount of cash into circulation. On the other hand they spend much less on opium. Silk is not as generally worn as in Sibsagar, and the women do not own much valuable jewellery.

Convention-
al restric-
tions.

The inhabitants of Kamrup are not encumbered by many conventional restrictions. All castes catch fish for their own consumption, but only the Doms or Nadiyals, the Charals or Namasudras, and the animistic tribes of Bodo origin will sell it. Brahmans, Ganaks, and Kayasthas decline to cultivate the *eri* worm; but, apart from this, there are few restrictions imposed by caste

which are not common to the rest of India. All over the district, Hindus decline to touch the plough on the last day of the month, the day of the new moon, and the day when the moon is eleven days old; and here and there certain days in the week are considered to be inauspicious. In Rangia tahsil, for instance, a Tuesday or a Saturday is thought to be the appropriate day on which to begin ploughing or to sow summer rice; but they are the only two days in the week on which *sali* dhan must not be sown, and in the Nalbari tahsil they are close days as far as house building is concerned. In the Bajali tahsil the restrictions seem to be vexatiously minute. *Sali* dhan must not be sold on Mondays and Thursdays, and revenue is not paid on those days. *Ahu* dhan is not sold, or even given away, on Saturdays and Tuesdays; and Sunday and Monday are days on which no prudent person would plough his fields or sow the seed.

At the time when we first came into possession of the Province, the difficulty of communications proved a most serious obstacle to its development. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business. McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post, which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days.*

* Topography of Assam—pages 9 & 82.

**Beginning of
steam
navigation.**

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the valley, but in 1848, the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the valley to Dibrugarh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department, on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure, but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills, when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made, with results that were not unsatisfactory even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary contrast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a country boat. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers, and in 1855 Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins complained that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected, the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand, the accommodation was designed on a very liberal scale. The regulations issued in 1851 expressly authorised

passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases ; a proviso which suggests a very deliberate voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seems to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati, but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but, in spite of this, it showed a fair profit, and it was evident that there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

In 1860, the Indian General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks, provided that the Government boats were taken from the line. Since that date the steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company, with whom they are associated. But in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the

Private
steamers
put on the
river.

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1867.

loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs, and, in a letter to Government, openly gave expression to the opinion that it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter, he drew the following dreary picture of the isolation of Assam :—

“ With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagnation, and torpidity, and a terrible sense of isolation, by which enterprise is chilled and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles; nor, on the other hand, is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him. ”

The daily
mail service.

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884, a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur.

Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached.

The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour, but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat, and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed which, in comparison with that attained by the large cargo boats, was most commendable.

The ports of call in Kamrup are Kholabanda for Barpeta, Palasbari, Soalkuchi, and Gauhati itself.

At the present day (1905) two steamers ply daily between Gauhati and Dhubri. One, which carries the mails, does not call at any of the intermediate ports and is supposed to do the up journey in twenty hours and the down in eleven. The other belongs to the service which runs between Goalundo and Dibrugarh and calls at each of the ghats mentioned above.

The Gauhati branch of the Assam-Bengal Railway runs ^{The Rail-} for a distance of $33\frac{1}{2}$ miles through the district, eastward ^{way.}

to the boundary of Nowgong. There are stations at Panikhaiti, Digru, and Khetri, but, as this portion of the district consists to a great extent of hills and marshes, it has not been much affected by the opening of the line. A line is now (1905) under construction from the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Pandughat, which will connect with the Eastern Bengal State Railway. On its completion there will be through railway communication, not only between Calcutta and Gauhati, but between Calcutta and Dibrugarh, though the Ganges and the Brahmaputra will still have to be crossed by ferries.

**The roads
on the south
bank.**

South of the Brahmaputra, the main artery of communication is the great trunk road, which runs the whole length of the valley from Fakirganj opposite Dhubri to Saikhoa opposite Sadiya. It enters Kamrup from Goalpara at the 48th mile and runs northward and eastward till it reaches the river at Palasbari. From Gauhati it turns southwards, and for eleven miles is a section of the Gauhati-Shillong road, but it then bends again sharply to the east, and enters the Nowgong district near Nakhola. There are inspection bungalows at Dhupdara (in the Goalpara district) 49 miles, Boko 37 miles, Chaygaon 26 miles, and Palasbari 15 miles west of Gauhati, and at Amrigog 9 and Sonapur 19 miles east of that town.

The only other roads of any importance south of the Brahmaputra are the road which runs eastward from Gauhati to Sonapur, and the roads connecting Barduar with Chaygaon, Palasbari (13½ miles), and the trunk road at a point 9 miles from Gauhati (19 miles).

The north trunk road enters the district from Goalpara at Raha, and leaves it at Dumnichauki, where the Barnadi forms the boundary between Kamrup and Mangaldai. There are inspection bungalows at the following places, going from west to east; the figures in brackets indicate the length of the stage. Raha, Halapakri ($6\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Bhawanipur ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Patacharkuchi (13 miles), Barama ($7\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Nalbari ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Rangia ($11\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Kamalpur (8 miles), Dumnichauki ($8\frac{3}{4}$ miles). From North Gauhati three roads run, to Dumnichauki, to Naokata, and to Nalbari. On the Naokata road there are inspection bungalows at Chutiapara (9 miles), Sutargao (10 miles), and Naokata (15 miles). On the Nalbari road there is an inspection bungalow at Hajo (14 miles), from which point it is 18 miles to Nalbari. The section between Hajo and Nalbari was injured by the earthquake of 1897, and there are places which are at present (1905) unfit for wheeled traffic in the rains. From Rangia a road runs to Darranga (26 miles), and from there there is a difficult footpath to the frontier village of Dewangiri, and a rough driving track to Subankhata. From Barama a road runs eastward to the boundary of Mangaldai, 29 miles away, passing Tamulpur, where there is an inspection bungalow, on the 17th mile. The Chapaguri mauza is tapped by a road which runs from Patacharkuchi to Kakilabari, where there is an inspection bungalow on the 16th mile. The roads and tracks in the western portion of the district can best be understood by a reference to the map which accompanies this volume. Most of the minor streams are

The roads on the north bank.

spanned by bridges, but there are no less than 45 ferries in the district which are still maintained across the larger rivers. With the exception of a section of the trunk road west and south of Gauhati, all of these roads are unmetalled, and are liable to be much cut up if asked to carry heavy traffic in the rainy season. In 1903-04 there were altogether 547 miles of cart road and tracks maintained either by the Local Boards or the Public Works Department in Kamrup.

**Navigable
rivers.**

In the rainy season the rivers of the district are largely used for the removal of grain and other produce from the interior. The following statement shows in a concise form the principal rivers used as trade routes, and the extent to which they can be so used in the wet and dry season: —

Names of rivers.	Highest point to which a boat of 4 tons burthen can proceed in the	
	Cold weather.	Rains.
Alga	Not navigable ...	Throughout.
Baralia	25 miles up from its junction with the Chaulkhoa.	Do.
Barnadi	Mukaldanga ...	Mukaldanga.
Beki	Not navigable ...	Throughout.
Chaulkhoa	Do. ...	Do.
Deojara	Do. ...	Do.
Digru	Barnihat ...	Barnihat.
Kalajal	Not navigable ...	Jatiabhang.
Kaldiya	Do. ...	Throughout.
Kulsi	Kukurmara ...	Ukiam.
Manas	Bogidara ...	Matharguri.
Pagladiya	Not navigable ...	Alagjhar.
Palla	Do. ...	Throughout.
Pamara	Do. ...	Do.
Pathimari Barnadi	Tamulpur ...	Tamulpur.
Sessa or Newnadi	Not navigable ...	Kamulpur.
Tihu	Do. ...	Throughout.

Large country boats come up the Brahmaputra to Gauhati, but only a comparatively small number proceed above that town.

The following abstract shows the development in postal business which has occurred during the past forty years :—

Post and Telegraph.

Number of post offices in		Number of letters and post cards (delivered in omitted thousands).			Number of Savings Bank accounts in		Balance at the credit of the depositors.
1875-76.	1903-04.	1861-62.	1870-71.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04	1903-04.
6	28	43	150	393	11	1,397	Rs. 2,42,000

The mails from Calcutta are at present carried by steamer from Dhubri, and are dropped at Kholabanda ghat for Barpeta, and at Gauhati. A list of the post and telegraph offices in the district will be found in the appendix (Statement B).

The wealthiest and most important traders in Kamrup are the shrewd Marwari merchants, locally known as Kaiyas. Most of the import trade is in their hands, and they bring up from Calcutta piece goods, clothes and blankets, grain and pulse of various kinds, salt, oil, ghi, cement, corrugated iron, metal utensils, and thread. The chief exports of the district are mustard seed, lac, unhusked rice, hides, and timber. The Kaiyas are the principal exporters of the district, but in the Barpeta subdivision, the wits of the people seem to have been sharpened by the unpleasant character of their surroundings.

Commerce and Trade.

The Assamese traders of this quarter are not content with buying up the mustard crop in the vicinity, but they extend their operations to Upper Assam, and in the rains their boats are to be found as far east as the Majuli.

Gauhati and Barpeta are the most important trading centres. The number of shops owned by Marwaris in the interior is not so large as it is in Upper Assam; and the village shopkeeper, who retails salt and oil from a small grass hut, is generally a much less important person than the Kaiya. The principal trading villages are Palasbari, Nalbari, Hajo, and Rangia. A list of all the villages in which there are three or more permanent shops will be found in the appendix (Statement C). A good deal of business is also transacted at the *hats* or markets where the raiyats meet on certain days in the week to exchange the products of their farms. A list of these markets will be found in the appendix (Statement D).

Bhutila fairs. Trans-frontier trade is carried on with Bhutan at Dar-ranga and Subankhata. The sites of these frontier fairs are picturesque enough. Immediately to the north are the tumbled masses of the Bhutan Hills, whose outer ranges, unlike the mountains of Upper Assam, are singularly destitute of forest. The plain is for the most part covered with short turf, dotted over here and there with patches of high grass and an occasional khair tree. There are no villages in the vicinity, but every winter grass huts are built for the occupation of the Marwari merchants and the traders from Barpeta who fre-

quent the place. The Bhutias come down in considerable numbers with lac, wax, chillies, blankets, ponies, donkeys, and goats. They sell these things to the traders, and with the proceeds buy cotton thread and cloth, rice, *eri* cloth and thread, and brass vessels. In the latter articles there is a considerable trade, and Morias come from Gauhati to manufacture the large brass cans which the Bhutias use to distil their country spirit. The trade is generally transacted on a cash basis, though the hillmen sometimes barter salt and chillies for rice; the usual rate of exchange being three or four baskets of rice for one of salt, and two of rice for one of chillies. Starting from these centres, the Bhutias travel about the country and traffic with the villagers and the traders in the interior. The big stout men, with their dirty rather insolent looking faces, and their layers of filthy clothing, are a common sight in Kamrup in the cold weather, as they march about the roads with huge baskets of merchandise on their backs, and strings of shaggy little mules, donkeys, and ponies.

The other fairs held in the district are not at present of very much importance. A list of the places where these fairs are held will be found in the appendix (Statement E). Most of them are connected with some religious festival.

Gauhati town (Goa-hathi=high land covered with areca-nut trees) is situated on the left bank of the Brahmaputra river in $26^{\circ}11'$ N. and $91^{\circ}45'$ E. It lies on the trunk road from Bengal to Sadiya, and is at present the terminus of the Assam Valley Branch of the Assam-

Municipal-
ties. Gau-
hati.

Bengal Railway, though a line is under construction along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, which will connect it by rail with Calcutta. An excellent metalled road runs from the steamer ghat to Shillong, the headquarters of the Local Administration.

A steam ferry crosses the Brahmaputra at this point, and the place is a port of call for the river steamers. The town is growing very slowly, and the population in 1872, 1881, 1891, and 1901 was 11,492, 11,695, 8,283, and 11,661 respectively. The figures for the two earlier years include the population of North Gauhati. The population of North and South Gauhati in 1901 was 14,244. The bulk of the population, as in most of the towns of Assam, is composed of foreigners. Modern Gauhati is identified with Pragjyotishpur, the capital of king Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata; and when Kamrup was conquered by the Ahoms it became the residence of the viceroy of Lower Assam. The extensive earthworks which protect it on the land side, the numerous large tanks, and the brick and masonry remains which are found in every direction beneath the soil, all clearly show that the place was originally an important city with a considerable population, which occupied both banks of the Brahmaputra. The town which lies on the north of the river is said to have been built by the Koch king Parikshit, who flourished at the end of the sixteenth century; and at the time of Mir Jumla's invasion Gauhati is described as lying north of the Brahmaputra.* By the end of the eighteenth century it had

* *Vide J. A. S. B. No. I, Part I, 1872, p. 69.*

fallen from its high estate, and Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809, describes it as a "very poor place." From 1826, when Assam was ceded to the British, till 1874, when the Province was separated from Bengal, Gauhati was the seat of the Local Government, and it is still the headquarters of the Commissioner and of the Judge of the Assam Valley districts, as well as of the ordinary district staff. The most noteworthy event in its recent history was the earthquake of 1897, which destroyed all the Government offices and wrecked every masonry building in the place. The town has since been re-built, and hardly any traces are now to be seen of this great catastrophe. The situation of Gauhati is extremely picturesque. To the south it is surrounded by a semi-circle of thickly-wooded hills, while in front rolls the mighty Brahmaputra, which during the rains is more than a mile across. In the centre of the stream lies a rocky island, the further bank is fringed with graceful palms, and the view is again shut in by ranges of low hills. Such a site, though beautiful, is far from healthy, and at one time the mortality in the town was very high. Improvements in the drainage and water-supply have done much to remedy this defect, but owing to its sheltered situation and the comparatively low rainfall (67 inches) the climate in summer is rather oppressive.

Gauhati was constituted a municipality, under Act V (B.C.) of 1876, in 1878; and Act III (B.C.) of 1884 was subsequently introduced in 1887. The town has an area of 2.95 square miles, and in addition to the Shillong-Gauhati cart road, which is maintained by the Public

Works Department, there are 14 miles of road kept up by the municipality, of which $9\frac{1}{2}$ are metalled. There are ten members of the Municipal Committee, six of whom are elected, and up to date the Deputy Commissioner has always filled the post of Chairman. The principal taxes are a tax of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the annual value of holdings, a latrine tax, and a water rate. The average municipal receipts and expenditure in the ten years ending with 1903 were Rs. 43,000, the chief sources of income being taxes on houses and lands (Rs. 6,500), water rate (Rs. 8,200), revenue from markets and slaughter houses (Rs. 5,500), and contribution (Rs. 10,100). The chief items of expenditure were water-supply (Rs. 13,000) conservancy Rs. (11,800), and public works (Rs. 7,400). The water-supply is pumped from the Brahmaputra, passed through filtering beds and distributed through standpipes all over the town. Since the completion of these works in 1887, cholera, which used to be very prevalent, has almost disappeared. The present source of intake is, however, situated in the centre of the town, and in a dry season is liable to be landlocked. A large sum has accordingly been sanctioned for the removal of the pumping station and filtering beds to a point above the town. Gauhati is the principal centre of trade in Lower Assam.

Barpeta.

Barpeta was formed into a municipality under Act V B. C. of 1876 in 1886. The committee consists of seven gentlemen nominated by Government under the presidency of the Subdivisional Officer. The principal tax levied is a cess at the rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent on the annual value of holdings; but considerably more than half the ordinary

income is derived from a grant made by Government, and from the fees levied on pounds, markets, and ferries. The actual incidence of taxation in 1903-04 was only As. 6-3 per head. The inhabitants of the town resent having to pay even this small sum, and have more than once petitioned for the abolition of the municipality. The area of the town is 1·37 square miles, and there are nearly 15 miles of road within municipal limits, but none of these roads are metalled. There is no attempt made to light the town and, though there are seven masonry wells, the inhabitants for the most part draw their water from small wells sunk inside their compounds. Barpeta is chiefly famous for the great Mahapurushia *sattrā* founded by the Vaishnavite reformer Sankar Deb at the end of the fifteenth century. The ground surrounding the *sattrā* is considered holy, and is crowded with huts huddled together in the most insanitary propinquity. The Mahapurushias have strong religious prejudices against vaccination, and when small-pox breaks out, it rages with exceptional severity, an epidemic which occurred in 1895, causing a mortality of 36 per mile from this disease alone. It is thus no matter for surprise that the population of the town does not increase ; and, though the birth-rate is unusually high, the population, which in 1881 was 11,332, fell at each successive census, and in 1901 was only 8,747. The town was at all times liable to flood, and since the earthquake of 1897, most of it goes under water in the rains. It is the headquarters of the Subdivisional Officer, and the public buildings include a hospital, court

police station, and high school. The manufactures are not of much importance and chiefly consist of 'canoes, earthenware well rings and other pottery, and really artistic gold filigree work. There is, however, a considerable trade in rice, pulse, and mustard, and the merchants of Barpeta extend their operations as far as the Majuli in Sibsagar.

There are no other places in the district which can be dignified by the name of town.

Local
Board's
History.

In the early day of British administration there was little money available for public works of any kind, and what there was was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was, as before, entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000,

which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a regulation was passed providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision ; the Barpeta board is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer.

The Local Boards are entrusted with the main-
Functions.
tenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, with the exception of the two trunk roads and the road from Barpeta to the steamer ghat, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVII. The annual budgets of

the Boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers.

The following statement shows the constitution of the Local Boards in the district, and the mileage of cart roads maintained by them in 1901.

Name.	Area in square miles.	Population.	MEMBERS.					Mileage of cart roads.
			Total number.	European.	Native.	Official.	Elected.	
Gauhati ...	2,584	473,252	18	5	13	5	13	262
Barpeta ...	1,274	115,235	7	...	7	1	6	118

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Native system—Early British settlements—The settlement of 1893—The settlement of 1903—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Settlement staff—Land tenures—Collection of land revenue—Unsettled waste—Excise—Opium—Country spirit—Laopani—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Administration of justice—Volunteering—Police—Jail—Education—Medical aspects—Surveys.

The system in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the state, and while so employed was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas* * of rupit land, and the land occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount was assessed at Re. 0-4-0 a *bigha*. In addition to this each house seems to have given about one rupee's worth of silk to the Raja and to have paid a tax of one rupee per plough. Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809, states that each parganna was let for a term of years to a Chaudri, who made what profit he could out

Land Revenue. Native system.

* One acre=3.025 bighas.

of land held in excess of the *paiks*' free grants. The Chaudris are said to have retained for their own use three-fifths of the gross collections, and to have treated the raiyats in a very oppressive manner. The nominal rent per plough of land in Kamrup was Rs. 2, but the exactions of the chaudri raised it from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7. The yield of a plough was said to be 79 maunds of "rough rice" and 16 maunds of mustard seed. Estimates of yield prior to the era of crop experiments were generally too high, so that the area of a plough was probably between four and five acres, and the rates exacted by the Chaudri must at that time have seemed oppressive. Permission to export mustard was only given on payment of five baskets of rice. North of the Brahmaputra, the whole of the profits of agriculture were, according to the same authority, absorbed by the Government or the hill tribes, each power sending a force, which took as much as possible from the cultivators.

Early
British set-
tlements.

On the occupation of the country by the British the system of compulsory labour was abolished, and the *paik* land was assessed to revenue. A regular land-tax was then introduced in place of the poll-tax, and the country divided into mahals. Annual settlements of these mahals were made with men who were simply collectors of revenue, selected from the more respectable but impoverished Assamese families. In 1834-35, a further change was made, and leases for terms of years began to be introduced. At the same time the collector of revenue was partially transformed into the present mauzadar, by being made a contractor for the amount of the assessment, and paid

by any extension of cultivation which might occur during the continuance of his lease. In 1861, a slight enhancement was imposed, and the revenue rates per *bigha* were raised to 6 annas for *rupit* and 4 annas for other land.

In 1865, the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Colonel Hopkinson's settlement. Hopkinson, proposed to discriminate between *basti* or garden and other land, and to raise the *bigha* rates to Re. 1 for *basti*, 10 annas for *rupit*, and 8 annas for other land. No detailed enquiries were made; there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the three different classes of land; there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class or even between district and district. The revised rates were, however, so moderate that it was never seriously contended that they would have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson was of opinion that the existing assessment was ridiculously low, and, in support of his opinion, pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about four lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days represented a difference of about 40 per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the enormous enhancement the revenue was collected without difficulty.

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold The settlement of 1893. division of land was retained, but instead of imposing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were divided into four grades and

the rates assessed varied with the grade of the village. * The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by sub-tenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and

* The following rates per bigha were imposed.

Class.	Basti.		Rupit.		Faringati.	
	Rs.	as.	Rs.	as.	Rs.	as.
1st	1	6	1	0	0	12
2nd	1	4	0	14	0	10
3rd	1	2	0	12	0	9
4th	1	0	0	10	0	8

elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based, was that the worst lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities. Subsequently the idea gained ground that the assessment was not as low as had been at first supposed. The earthquake of 1897 seriously injured a considerable tract of land, either by covering it with sand or by rendering it liable to flood. The total land revenue demand of the district was, accordingly, reduced by Rs. 60,000 in 1901-02.

The resettlement which was begun at the close of 1902 was carried out in a much more elaborate and scientific manner than any of its predecessors. While the maps and records were being brought up to date, the Settlement Officer made detailed enquiries with the object of ascertaining the classes into which the land could be most suitably divided, and the relative value to be allotted to each class. The unit of settlement was what is known as the soil unit. Each soil unit pays a certain quantity of revenue, the actual sum assessed per soil unit varying with the village. To every *bigha* of land is assigned a certain number of soil units, the number varying with the class of land concerned. Thus in every *bigha* of first class homestead land, there were 24 soil units, whereas in every *bigha* of badly flooded land there were only 5, and whatever revenue might be assessed on badly flooded land in the village, first class

The settle-
ment of 1903.
The soil
unit.

homestead land, if there was any, paid nearly five times as much. The data used when determining the number of soil units to be allotted to each class of land were (1) the local enquiries of the Settlement Officer and his Assistants, (2) experiments made with the view of ascertaining the average quality of the crop, (3) the opinions expressed by certain selected persons, and (4) the views of the raiyats, who were consulted as much as possible. Considerable weight was attached to the opinions of the raiyats, as it was thought that they at any rate should know the comparative value of the different kinds of land they held. It will be seen that the process of differentiation was carried much further at the new settlement than at the one which preceded it. In 1893, the maximum rate per *bigha* in a village could never be more than double the minimum. In 1903, the maximum rate might be nearly five times the minimum. In 1893, all land in the village followed the class of the village. In 1903, there was no such restriction, and a small area of poor land in an otherwise rich village could be assessed on its own merits.

Value assigned to each soil unit at the new settlement.

After the maps and records had been brought up to date, a special staff was deputed to determine the class into which each field or homestead fell. The total number of soil units in the block, or group of several mauzas into which for re-assessment purposes the district was divided, was then ascertained,* and the former revenue

* The area falling under each class was known, and all that was required was to multiply the number of *bighas* in each class by the number of soil units in the class.

of the block divided by this figure. The quotient represented the incidence of revenue per soil unit under the former settlement and was known as the *unit incidence*.

The next stage in the proceedings was the determination of the new *unit rate*, the rate which was to be assessed on each soil unit during the current settlement.

The Settlement Officer first decided whether he would raise or lower the unit rate for the block as a whole, and took as his standard in assessing villages the unit rate he had fixed on for the block. This was the rate imposed on the average village, while villages above or below the average had the rate raised or lowered in proportion to the extent to which they seemed to differ from the mean. The general condition of the inhabitants, the prices they could obtain for their produce, and the facilities for trade which they enjoyed were the principal factors taken into consideration when determining the value to be assigned to the soil unit of the village.

Land in Kamrup was divided into no less than 48 Classes of land. different classes. Rice land was first divided into two main heads, good and poor. Each of these heads was further sub-divided into four groups, *i. e.*, *bardhantoli* or land ordinarily fit for the cultivation of *bar dhan*, *laghantoli* or land on which *lahi dhan* could be grown. *Kharmatoli* or land on which transplanted *ahu* or the inferior kinds of *lahi dhan* could be grown, and *ahutoli* or land unfit for transplanted rice of any kind, but fit for broadcast *ahu*. Each of these groups was again sub-divided into five minor heads, *sudharan* or average, *dongto-i* or land irrigated by artificial channels, *banotia* or land exposed to

flood, *olpara* or land which receives the drainage of the village site, and *dakshin chechukia* or shaded land. The area included in the last two classes was, however, very small, and after 1903-04 they were abandoned. In addition to these forty classes of rice land there were two more classes for land growing *bae*, one ordinary (*baotoli*), the other flooded (*ban-tiz baotoli*). Deeply flooded land (*jalatan*) from which a crop can only occasionally be expected formed another class, and there were four classes of homestead land (*ba-ti*). All land which was not included in any of the preceding classes was styled *faringati*. The following statement shows the number of soil units usually assigned to a *bigha* of each class of land in Kamrup:

		<i>Sadharan.</i>	<i>Dongtoli.</i>	<i>Banotia.</i>	<i>Olpara.</i>	<i>Dakshin chechukia.</i>		
1		2	3	4	5	6	7	
<i>Athaletiya</i> or <i>Munialia</i>	<i>Bardhantoli.</i>	20	23	12	25	13	<i>Baotoli</i>	... 9
	<i>Laghantoli.</i>	16	18	12	20	11	<i>Banotia Baotoli</i>	... 5
	<i>Kharmatoli.</i>	13	15	10	16	8	<i>Jalatan</i>	... 5
	<i>Ahutoli.</i>	9	...	7	11	6	<i>Faringati</i>	... 5
<i>Baliniria</i> or <i>Kachua</i>	<i>Bardhantoli.</i>	16	18	10	20	11	<i>Basti, 1st class</i>	... 24
	<i>Laghantoli.</i>	12	14	9	15	8	" 2nd "	... 20
	<i>Kharmatoli.</i>	8	10	6	10	6	" 3rd "	... 16
	<i>Ahutoli.</i>	7	...	5	9	5	" 4th "	... 10

The incidence of revenue on each soil unit differed in the different villages, but was generally about one anna.

At the time of writing (1905) the settlement is still in progress.

The following statement shows the gradual expansion of the land revenue and the settled area since the district first came under our administration:—

A. D.			Rs.	Acres.	Growth of land reve- nue.
1834-35	...	...	2,11,951	324,301	
1852-53	...	...	3,48,017	475,533	
1865-66	...	...	4,25,163	472,510	
1868-69	...	...	7,97,267	not available.	
1892-93	...	...	9,79,347	695,887	
1893-94	...	...	13,33,314	688,029	
1902-03	...	...	12,33,082	647,651	

The figures for years in which a new settlement was introduced are printed in italics.

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy land is not readily resigned, and frequently possesses a considerable market value. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice *ahu*, and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. Most of the fluctuating area lies in a belt on either side of the Brahmaputra. In 1903-04, only 9 per cent of the settled area of the *sadr* subdivision was classed as fluctuating, but in the Barpeta subdivision the proportion was no less than 50 per cent.

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops of the district are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic lease.

The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorise the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognised. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either form of lease, or any individual field within the holding, can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Deputy Commissioner.

The mandal.

The basis of the land revenue system is the mandal, the village accountant and surveyor, who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per mensem. In March he proceeds to his circle, inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *dagchitha*, in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *jama-bandhi* or rent-roll, which classifies the fields by holdings, and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot weather he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which

has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops ; he assists in the collection of the revenue and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land. In most provinces in India a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can be resigned, and there is not as a rule any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. The state of affairs in Kamrup is very different. In 1902-03, the total settled area was 648,000 acres, the area excluded was 32,000 acres and the area of land newly taken up 52,000 acres. It must not, however, be supposed that this kaleidoscopic shifting of the fields is taking place in every portion of the district, and that everywhere may be seen the spectacle of cultivated land becoming jungle and jungle land changing into fields of waving rice. In the established portion land is seldom given up, but in the fluctuating area, as has been already explained, it is less trouble to burn the jungle and break up new land every second or third year, than to clean the fields of the weeds which spring up after the land has been two or three times cropped.

Above the mandal comes the supervisor kanungo, a superior peripatetic officer on pay ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, ^{a superior settlement staff.} who checks his work both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy collectors and draw salaries ranging from Rs.100 to Rs.200 per

mensem. The appointments are usually made by selection from candidates who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must have either taken a university degree or have read up to that standard.

The total sanctioned staff for the Kamrup district is 3 sub-deputy collectors, excluding those employed as tahsildars, 14 supervisor kanungoes, and 296 mandals.*

Land.

The different tenures in the district fall under two main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and (2) those under which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, but there are also considerable areas of revenue free (*lakhiraj*) land, and land settled at half rates (*nisfi khiraj*). In the time of the Ahom kings the whole of this land is said to have been held rent free, but in 1834 the Government of India ruled that "all rights to hold lands free of assessment founded on grants made by any former Government must be considered to have been cancelled by the British conquest. All claims therefore for restoration to such tenures can rest only on the indulgence of Government

* The sanctioned staff will probably be modified on the re-introduction of the *mauzadari* system.

without any right".* Mr. David Scott, the first British Commissioner of Assam, found that, even under the Ahom Rajas, these revenue free lands had been assessed at the rate of five annas a *pura*,† and he imposed this cess, which was subsequently raised to eight annas, upon them. The Government of India then directed that an enquiry should be instituted into these claims and that all cases in which land was held on *bonâ fide* grants dating from before the time of the Burmese conquest, or on account of services which were still performed, should be reported to them for orders. These instructions were not fully observed by the Commissioner of that time, Captain (subsequently General) Jenkins. This officer, for reasons which have never been ascertained, drew a broad distinction between *debottar* or temple lands, and *brahmottar* and *dharmaottar* lands, *i. e.*, lands which were devoted to some religious purpose but were not actually the property of a temple.‡ The former he released from all claims for revenue; on the latter he imposed the rate assessed by Mr. Scott, which happened to be half the full rates prevailing at

* Letter No. 790, dated 25th August 1834, from the Government of Bengal to the Commissioner of Assam. The history of these estates is discussed at length in the Introduction to the Assam Land Revenue Manual by Sir William Ward, K.C.S.I., page xci.

† A *pura* = 4 bighas. 3.025 bighas = 1 acre.

‡ *Debottar* estates are again of two kinds, *bhogdoni* and *paikan*. The raiyats on the former are bound to supply one daily ration, *bhog*, to the temple for each unit of land. The raiyats on the latter are required to render certain somewhat vague kinds of service. *Bhogdoni* land was generally confirmed, possibly, as the Settlement Officer observes, because claims to *bhog* were easier to determine than somewhat vague and uncertain claims to service.

the time. No report was submitted to the Government of India and no final orders were ever received from them, but the right of the former class of proprietors to hold free of revenue, and of the latter at half the usual rates, has been definitely recognised. The total area of *lakhiraj* land in the district in 1903 was 33,908 acres and of *nisfi khiraj* land 1,47,769 acres. The area settled year by year at full rates is shown in Table XV.

Grant of land
for the culti-
vation of spe-
cial crops.

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1861. The underlying principle in each case was that the land should be held on long leases at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions. Between 1861 and 1876 the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs. 2-8-0 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854 were allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there are now only 31 acres of land in the district held under the rules of 1838, and only 457 acres under the rules of 1854, while there are 4,456 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for, though it is nominally put up to auction, there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For

two years the grant remains revenue free, and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh, and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules will be found in Table XV.

The first settlement was introduced by Captain Bogle in 1833-34.* He divided the district into 76 parganas, each of which was placed under a Chaudri, who was assisted by *patwaris*, *takureahs*, *kakatis* and peons. The cost of collection was heavy, and amounted to 18 per cent of the revenue demand. At the time of Mr. Mills' visit, in 1853, the cost of collection had risen to 20½ per cent, and the fiscal staff consisted of 151 Chaudris, who had under them 89 *patwaris*, 495 *takureahs*, 497 *kakatis* and 993 peons. Settlements were made with the Chaudris either annually or for a term of years. The latter arrangement was not popular, and in 1853, out of 311 mahals, 216 were held on annual lease. As, however, the raiyat was allowed to break up any quantity of land rent free on his agreeing to pay the rent of his entire holding during the whole time of the Chaudri's lease of the parganas, it would appear that the Chaudri had something to lose but very little to gain from a lease for a term of years.†

Collection of
land
revenue.

The general tendency since that date has been to increase the size of the unit of collection. In 1867, the

Larger mau-
zas and tah-
sils.

* Captain Bogle's report will be found at page 65 of File No. 298, Bengal, of 1835.

† *Vide* Mr. Mills' report on Kamrup.

mauzadars, as the collecting officers were called, received 15 per cent of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later their commission was reduced to 10 per cent, and in 1872 the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent could only be drawn on the first Rs. 6,000 of revenue, 5 per cent being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, the idea gained ground that Government would do better by putting the mauzadar aside and employing salaried officials as a collecting agency. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated, and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him. The first tahsil was opened at Palasbari in April 1883, and two more were established in the same year at Boko and Chaygaon. Then followed Patidarang in 1884, Gauhati and Rangia in 1885, Bajali in the Barpeta subdivision in 1886, Tamulpur and Hajo in 1887, Barama and Nalbari in 1888, and Raha in the Barpeta subdivision in 1891.

**Comparative
advantages
of tahsildars
and mauza-
dars.**

The tahsildari system is cheaper than that of collection through mauzadars, the cost in one case being about 5 per cent, in the other about 7 per cent of the gross amount realised. Serious difficulties are, however, experienced in dealing direct with such a large body of raiyats, and there is no doubt that the tahsil system is

not as popular with the people as the one which it replaced. A mauzadar of experience knows whether delay in payment is due to shortness of funds or to recalcitrancy; he knows the time which is most convenient for payment in individual cases; and, as he is not bound by the *kist* dates, his collection admits of an elasticity which no Government rules can establish. It has the further advantage of providing a body of representative men, who, while regarded by the people as their leaders, are bound to the Government by the facts of their position. It has accordingly been decided to try the experiment of gradually breaking up the tahsils and substituting in their place mauzadars who will be entrusted with the duty of collecting from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 of revenue. This policy has already been adopted in the case of the Raha and Boko tahsils, which were resolved into their constituent mauzas in 1903, while the Tamulpur tahsil was abolished in 1904. The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments, three-fifths on January 15th and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the Government demand from the sale of mustard and pulse, where it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement is also due in one instalment on that date. If a raiyat defaults a notice of demand is issued calling upon him to pay up the amount due.* This has usually the desired result, but if further steps are called

* Steps have recently been taken to empower Deputy Commissioners to dispense with the notice of demand and proceed at once to attachment if they think it necessary to do so.

for the defaulter's property is attached. It is very seldom necessary to do more than this, but, as a last resort, the goods and even the lands of the defaulter can be sold. In 1903-04, notice of demand was issued on account of 17 per cent of the total land revenue demand, and property was attached on account of 5 per cent. The number of cases in which it was necessary to have recourse to sale was very small, and the revenue on account of which property was sold only represented 0.1 per cent of the total demand.

Revenue realized in 1830 by release of slaves.

At the present day it seems strange to read that in 1830 orders were issued by the Government of India that if a defaulter possessed no other property, his revenue might be realized by releasing a certain proportion of his slaves, each slave being reckoned as equivalent to from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100. It is, however, clear that the slavery must have been of a very mild and patriarchal character, as the local authorities were warned to satisfy themselves that the emancipated slaves would not nullify the beneficent intentions of Government by placing themselves again in the position of bondsmen to their former masters.

Town land.

In 1893, the town of Gauhati was re-settled for a term of fifteen years. The rate of assessment for trade sites varied from Rs. 300 to Rs. 30 an acre, and that for residential land from Rs. 9 to Rs. 6. Under the rules now in force waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual

letting value of the site, and the lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner thinks fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. These rules do not, however, apply to Barpeta, which is treated like any other village. The greater part of the town is, however, included in a *nisfikkhiraj* grant held by the Barpeta *sattrā*.

In 1903-04, no less than 52 per cent of the total area of the district was classified as unsettled and culturable waste. The expression "culturable" must, however, be received with a certain degree of reserve, and a large proportion of this area is probably unfit for permanent habitation or continuous cultivation. The bulk of this waste land is situated in the Barpeta subdivision, in the Tamulpur tahsil, and in the Boko and Gauhati tahsils, south of the Brahmaputra, which contain large areas of hill and swamp. The total area of each fiscal unit and the area which was waste in 1902-03 will be found in Table XV A.

The excise revenue of Kamrup is not very large, and from Table XIII it will be seen that in 1903-04 it only amounted to Rs. 2,33,000, which was less than a third of the revenue realised under this head in Lakhimpur. About three-fourths of the excise revenue is derived from opium. Full details with regard to the number of shops for the sale of liquor and the different kinds of drugs, and the revenue obtained, will be found in Table XVI.

Prior to 1860 no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained

indulgence in opium were undeniable, and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883 the right to sell opium in a particular mahal was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold, as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74, there were in Kamrup 845 shops for the retail vend of opium; thirty years later there were only 112. The opium habit was never as prevalent in Lower as in Upper Assam, and in Kamrup it appears to be gradually dying out. In 1873-74, 290 maunds of opium were consumed, in 1899-1900 only 121. Ganja and cigarettes are said to be taking its place to some extent, and it is evidently not popular with the rising generation.

The drug is generally swallowed in the form of pills, or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up

into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed.

The outstill system of excise is in force in Kamrup, ^{Country} that is to say, the right to manufacture and sell liquor ^{spirit.} at a given spot is every year put up to auction.

From the statement in the margin it will be seen that though there has been a large decrease in the number of shops since 1880 there has been a considerable expansion of the revenue.

Year.	No. of shops.	Revenue.
		Rs.
1873-74	10	3,473
1879-80	27	5,870
1889-90	11	6,364
1899-1900	12	14,320

This is due to the increase in the number of foreigners and to greater competition at the auction sales. The natives of Assam, who form the bulk of the population of Kamrup, drink, when they drink at all, home made beer or spirit, for though the unlicensed distillation of spirit is illegal, the process is so simple that it is not easy to detect and punish the evasion of the law. The result is that the revenue from country spirit in Kamrup is very low, and in 1899-1900 was only a tenth of that obtained in Sibsagar, though the total population of the two districts was about the same. The explanation is to be found in the fact that in Sibsagar the number of foreigners is ten times as numerous as in Kamrup.

The still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers, where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

Material employed.

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed—mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers, or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers, or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual

ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is occasionally added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul*, if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by re-distilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

Laopani.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attained to Hinduism but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth. No attempt is made to restrict the manufacture

of rice beer in moderate quantities for home use, as any attempt to do so would certainly lead to corruption and oppression. In a matter of this kind the influence of the Hindu gosains, and the pressure of local village opinion, has more effect than any direct action of the Government.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Kamrup, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage.

The revenue raised from income tax in Kamrup is lower than that obtained from any other district in the Province except Nowgong, and in 1903-04 only amounted to Rs. 11,600. The receipts, moreover, show no tendency to increase. As far back as 1888 they amounted to Rs. 15,500, and the maximum was reached in 1893-94 with Rs. 17,200. The marked decrease that occurred in 1904 was due to the exemption of incomes between Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 from taxation. The condition of the people has, however, been far from satisfactory. Public health was for a time extraordinarily bad; agriculture was seriously affected by the earthquake of 1897 and the subsequent floods, and during the last years of the century the taxable income must have been appreciably diminished. The great majority of the assesseses under Part IV (Other sources of income) were shopkeepers, persons engaged in the mustard trade, boat-

builders, and professional graziers. Several of the most prosperous Marwari merchants are assessed in Calcutta on the profits made by them in Assam.

Stamps.

The receipts under the head of judicial stamps in 1903-04 amounted to Rs. 51,078. Kamrup stood second in the list of districts in the Assam Valley, but the revenue obtained was barely one-eighth of that realised in Sylhet. Non-judicial stamps brought in Rs. 16,369, a sum which was exceeded by Sibsagar and largely exceeded by Lakhimpur.

Public works.

Public works are in charge of the Executive Engineer who is stationed at Shillong and is entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and telegraph offices at district headquarters, circuit houses, dâk bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The roads which are directly under the Department are the south trunk road (80 miles), the north trunk road from Raha to Dumunichauki (72 miles), and the road from Barpeta to Kholabanda (18 miles).

It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution.

Government.

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions. Gauhati is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner; Bar-

peta is entrusted to an assistant magistrate, who is usually a native of the country. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed three subordinate magistrates and two sub-deputy-collectors as his immediate assistants and a second magistrate and a sub-deputy-collector are usually posted at Barpeta. The unit of police administration is the thana, of which there are 16 in the district, and of revenue administration the mauza or the tahsil.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from orders Criminal and Civil Justice. passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William in Calcutta. In 1902, there were seven stipendiary and two honorary magistrates in the district, and the former decided 1,520 and the later 17 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 3,884 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 1,334 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is little serious crime in Kamrup, and most of these offences were either petty assaults or thefts of small sums of money. Civil work is not heavy, and the Deputy Commissioner acts as sub-judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision discharges the functions of a munsif. In 1902, the sub-judge heard 12 original cases and 25 appeals, while 1,630 original suits were disposed of by the munsifs. A large proportion of the cases were simple money suits, nearly four-fifths of which were disposed of without contest.

Registration. The Deputy Commissioner is also the registrar of the district, and one of the assistant magistrates in each division acts as sub-registrar. Only 817 documents were registered in 1903.

**Volunteer-
ing.** A Volunteer Corps was formed at Gauhati in 1885, with 39 members on the rolls, but was disbanded in 1891 as it was found impossible to keep it up to strength. A new company was formed in 1894, and was, at first, amalgamated with the Shillong Volunteer Rifles, but, in 1901, it was united with the Assam-Bengal Railway Volunteer Corps.

Police. The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consisted in 1904 of two inspectors, 24 sub-inspectors, and 310 constables. One hundred and forty-four smooth-bore martinis are allotted to Kamrup, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry.

The district is fairly free from serious crime and rural police are not employed; such assistance as is necessary being given by the village elders or *gaoburas*. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve

all processes in warrant cases. There is very little organised crime, and the actual police duties are comparatively light. Table XIX shows the strength and cost of the police in 1881, 1891, and 1901; Table XX the names of the different police stations and out posts, and the force quartered at each.

During the cold weather, the frontier is protected by detachments from the Garo Hills military police battalion. **Military Police.** Thirty men, under a native officer, are stationed at Suban-khata, and ten men under a non-commissioned officer at Darranga, a little to the east. At the end of March these outposts are withdrawn as the Bhutias then begin to retire to the hills.

There is a large jail at Gauhati, which has accommoda- **Jail.**

Year.	No. of deaths	Death-rate per mille.
1881	... 33	111
1884	... 14	94
1885	... 12	78
1886	... 12	81
1891	... 11	74
1892	... 25	130
1896	... 15	78
1899	... 28	123

tion for 297 prisoners. The sleeping wards are raised some distance from the ground on masonry pillars, and are thus well ventilated and dry, and every care is taken of the prisoner's health. In spite of this the mortality is generally high. From the statement in the margin it appears that in the twenty years ending with 1900 the annual death-rate on no less than eight occasions exceeded 70 per mille.

Years in which the number of deaths was less than ten are excluded from the statement. In the three years in which the mortality was highest the prisoners were attacked by cholera, and bowel complaints are at all times troublesome. Very few prisoners are now employed on

extra-mural labour as this form of work was found to be incompatible with a satisfactory standard of discipline. The prison manufactures include oil pressing, cane and bamboo work, weaving of durries, cloth and net bags, dhan husking, and brick making. At Barpeta there is a Magistrate's lock-up. Prisoners on conviction are transferred to Gauhati.

Education.

In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College described the state of education in the Assam Valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that, unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial schools had only recently been introduced in Assam. In 1847-48 there were 24 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress, as on the occasion of Mr. Mills' visit in 1853 there were only 26 schools of all grades. 1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXII.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	No. of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females
1874-75 ...	18	1,118	175	3,684	4,802	117	...	...
1880-81 ...	14	1,101	203	5,106	6,207	104	12.48	0.27
1890-91 ...	14	1,111	319	9,236	10,347	61	20.69	1.02
1900-01 ...	15	1,376	281	10,881	12,257	48	27.05	1.02

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

Kamrup is the only district in the Assam Valley in which there is a college. In 1901, a Government second grade college was opened at Gauhati. The buildings have been designed on liberal lines, and it is equipped with an excellent library and laboratory, and with separate hostels for Hindus and Muhammadans. **College.**

High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools ; in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. There are three high schools in the district, two at Gauhati, one maintained by Government and one a private institution, and one at Barpeta. **Secondary Education.**

The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—(1) Bengali or Assamese, comprising Literature, Grammar, and Composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of

Euclid (Book 1), Mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, (6) Botany and Agriculture.

The middle schools are situated at Kahara, North Gauhati, Gauhati, Palasbari, Chaygaon, Nalbari, Kamalpur, Tamulpur, Chakchaka, Bajali, and Chenga. There is a survey school at Gauhati, and law classes are regularly held.

**Primary
education.**

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than 4 per cent of the total, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. The number of schools of each grade, and the number of pupils reading in them, will be found in Table XXII. Sixty-eight per mille of the male population of Kamrup were returned as literate in 1901, a proportion which was higher than that recorded in

any other district in the Assam Valley. The proportion of literate females was only two per mile.

In 1903-04, there were three presses, in Gauhati. A weekly paper and monthly magazine are occasionally published.

**Printing
Presses.**

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Gauhati. It contains seven dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important of his duties. He also acts as Superintendent of the jail, controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death-rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

**Medical
Staff.**

It has already been suggested in the chapter on population that there may be something in the climate, the sub-soil level of the water, or some other factor which for the present remains obscure, which is prejudicial to life and health, but there can be no doubt that the conditions under which the people pass their days are not conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from chills, which might have been prevented by the

**Complete
absence of
rural sanitation.**

purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital Statistics.

Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headman to the mandal of the circle, this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals, as the *gaobura* was an unpaid servant of Government and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each headman $2\frac{3}{4}$ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901, the mean recorded birth-rate was 27 per mille, the death-rate was 32 per mille, and it is certain that both of these figures were much below the truth. The statistics of age recorded at the census are, however, so unreliable that it is not possible to fix a normal birth and death-rate for the district.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death			most often takes in Kamrup, at any rate according to the official returns. These returns are, however, so inaccurate, and so little reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examina-	Causes of mortality. Cholera.
Cholera death-rate per mille.				
1882	...	12.2		
1884	...	5.6		
1886	...	8.8		
1890	...	4.9		
1892	...	7.4		
1895	...	8.1		
1897	...	17.5		
1900	...	7.4		
Death-rate all causes England.				
1901	...	16.9		

tion. Most fatal illnesses are accompanied by a rise in temperature, and the villagers are in consequence very prone to ascribe every death to fever. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death-rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent, and for the purposes of comparison the death-rate in England from all causes in 1901 is added. In 1897, the recorded death-rate from this disease alone exceeded the death-rate from all causes in England in 1901.

The disease appears in every part of the district, but is especially common near Palasbari and Rani. The bacillus thrives in the muddy banks of tanks and rivers when they are warmed by the sun and moistened by the rains of April and May, and cholera is thus most prevalent in the spring before the floods rise, and in the autumn when the water level is falling. When the disease appears in an aggravated form hospital assistants are sent with medicine amongst the people, but it is difficult to do much for their relief.

**Small-pox
and fevers.**

Small-pox is especially common amongst the Mahapurushias, who are opposed to vaccination on religious grounds. Barpeta town is the great stronghold of these people, and in 1895 the mortality in that place from small-pox alone was no less than 36 per mille. Soalkuchi and Barduar are also often visited by this disease. The highest death-rates per mille recorded from this cause during recent years were 1·1 in 1895, 2·9 in 1896 and 2·1 in 1897. Fevers are generally of a mixed type and do not differ materially from the malarial fevers of other parts of India. They are most prevalent in May and June and again in October and November, when they are particularly severe, and sink to a minimum in February. The Civil Surgeon has never seen any cases of fever associated with hæmoglobinuria, which is generally known as black water fever, though according to Manson it is found in Assam. Cases of enteric fever have occurred in Gauhati.

**Other
diseases.**

Diphtheria does not usually occur in a virulent form, and neither dysentery nor tuberculosis are common amongst the Assamese. Cases of goitre are frequently found in the neighbourhood of Gauhati, and tetanus and anthrax are met with in every part of the district. Human beings suffer from the latter disease, but it does not as a rule have a fatal termination. The villagers as a whole are fairly free from venereal disease in all its forms. Skin diseases and worms are ailments which are constantly brought for treatment to the dispensaries. The commonest form of worm is the round worm (*ascaris*), and after

that the thread worm (*oxyaris*). Tape worm is not common, and the guinea worm is practically unknown.

The native methods of midwifery leave much to be desired, and it is feared that the mortality in childbirth from puerperal fever and other causes is considerable.

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901 :—

“ When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the Province it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90 a specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called beri-beri of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and beri-beri were merely different names for anchylostomiasis, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the *dochmius duodenalis*, a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the Province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy. But the support which was given to Dr. Giles' views by local medical opinion was withdrawn, when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that anchylostoma were present, in varying numbers, in no less than 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of anchylostomiasis that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which

could be communicated from the sick to the healthy. This opinion was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that, whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not ancylostomiasis. The suggestion that malaria could be communicated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898 'Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world.'

A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever. Externally the chief point of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lies in the rapidity with which the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy. Recent investigations have, however, thrown some doubt on the malarial theory. Certain parasites called Leishman-Donovan bodies have been discovered in the spleens of fever patients, and it is thought possible that they may be the cause of the complaint. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture. As to its effects there can unhappily be no question. The

disease appears to have entered Kamrup in 1888 and very soon produced a marked increase in the total number of deaths attributed to fever. It was especially virulent in the Boko and Chaygaon tahsils, in the Rani and Dakhin Sarubangshar mauzas in the Palasbari tahsil, and in the Ramdia, Beltala and Dimaria mauzas in the Gauhati tahsil. These places all lie south of the Brahmaputra, and the effects of the epidemic can be judged from the fact that the population of that part of Kamrup which lies south of the river decreased by nearly 12 per cent between 1881 and 1891. Serious mortality was also caused in the southern mauzas of the Barpeta subdivision, i. e., Barpeta, Chenga, Bagribari, and Bhawanipur. It is a characteristic of the disease that it gradually burns itself out in the localities which it attacks, and in 1892 it began to die down in Kamrup, though the district is not yet entirely free from this appalling scourge.

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually sacrificed which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been some increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. The first dispensary was opened at Gauhati over thirty years ago. From the statement in the margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 13 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 161 to 982.

Year.	Dispensaries.	Patients treated.
	No.	No.
1881 ...	2	3,887
1891 ...	7	18,981
1901 ...	10	51,754

Increase in facilities for obtaining medical aid.

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Gauhati and Barpeta, which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of 102 and 72 patients respectively. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, dysentery and diarrhoea, dyspepsia and rheumatic affections. The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXV.

Survey.

A professional revenue survey of the district was made at the time when Assam was still a division of Bengal and the maps were published in 1872 and 1874. They are on the scale of one inch to the mile, and, in addition to topographical features, show sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1888 and brought up to date in 1893. An area of 1,570 square miles which included the more densely populated portions of the district was cadastrally surveyed in the seasons of 1883—86, and 1890—93. The maps are on the scale of 16 inches to the mile, and, in addition to topographical features, show the boundaries of each field. Certain areas* which were excluded from the operations of the professional party were subsequently surveyed by local agency on the basis of a theodolite traverse, and the results obtained from the professional and the local agency have been utilised in the revision of the one-inch map.

* The area so surveyed in Kamrup up to 30th September 1900 was 432 square miles.

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STATEMENT A.
List of Tea Gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or company to which it belongs.	Mans in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from Gauhati.	Total area on De- on 31st 1903.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st 1903.	Labour force on De- on 31st 1903.
			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	
1. Amchang	Kamrup Tea Association & Co	Panbari	14	928	342	253
2. Barbari	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Kharija Dimuria	25	887	138	346
3. Barduar	Mr. E. P. R. Gilman...	Barduar	28½	4,392	298	296
4. Barkomar	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Beltala	5	237	592	461
5. Belguri	Kamrup Tea Association & Co.	Panbari	17½	683	196	147
6. Chunsali	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Ramsa	3	954	(a)	(a)
7. Fatasil	Srijut Bati Pam Das	Beltala	1	35	3	4
8. Heagrabari	Srijut Chandra Narayan Kuar	Do. ...	6	25	6	8
9. Kamarkuchi	Mr. H. H. Dombraun	Panbari	12	381	115	137
10. Kendubam	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Dimuria	27	691	151	(b)
11. Lowmati	Do.	Panbari	15½	675	70	(b)
12. Luri	Do.	Kharija Dimuria	21½	404	250	(b)
13. Mandakata	Mr. E. P. R. Gilman	Barbanger	9	1,727	231	95
14. Nagrijuli	Nagrijuli Tea Co. ...	Gharghaon	49	1,825	450	242
15. Nunmati	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Ramsa	4	596	(a)	(a)
16. Ramgon	Munshi Danis Muhammad	Betna...	32	552	18	12
17. Rani ...	Babu Bipra Das Pal Chaudhuri...	Rani...	15	804	210	150
18. Sonapur	Chunsali Tea Co. ...	Panbari	19	1,074	394	(b)
19. Woodland	Babu Mahendra Nath Sarkar	Ramsa	2	28	13	4

(a) Included in Barkomar.
(b) Included in Barbari.

STATEMENT B.
List of Post Offices.

Post Office.	Mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Post Office.	Mauza or tahsil in which situated.
Barama ...	Barama tahsil ...	Kholabanda ...	Chenga mauza.
Barpeta ...	Barpeta mauza ...	Loharghat ...	Chaygaon tahsil.
Belsor ...	Nalbari tahsil ...	Mandakata ...	Patidarang tahsil.
Bhawanipur ...	B h a w a n i p u r mauza.	Nalbari ...	Nalbari tahsil.
Soko ...	Bangaon mauza...	North Gauhati ...	Gauhati tahsil.
Chakchaka ...	Dumkachakabausi	Palasbari *	Palasbari tahsil.
Chenga ...	Chenga mauza ...	Patacharkuchi ...	Pub Bajali mauza.
Chaygaon ...	Chaygaon tahsil...	Ranakuchi ...	Hajo tahsil.
Gauhati ...	Gauhati town ...	Rangia ...	Rangia tahsil.
Hajo ...	Hajo tahsil ...	Sonapur*	Gauhati tahsil.
Jagdala ...	Chapaguri mauza	Soalkuchi ...	Hajo tahsil.
Kamalpur ...	Patidarang tahsil...	Tamulpur ...	Pub Basika mauza.

The names marked with asterisks are combined post and telegraph offices.
There is also a departmental telegraph office at Gauhati.

STATEMENT C.

List of villages in which there are three or more permanent shops

Tahsil or mauza.	Village	No. of permanent shops.	Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
<i>Gauhati Sub-division.</i>			<i>Barpeta Sub-division.</i>		
	North Gauhati ...	14			
	Kamakhyā ...	7	Bajali ...	Hhebla (Nowsalihat)	
Palasbari ...	... ..	...		Jolah ...	
	Khanamukh ...	3		Patacharkuchi ...	
	Palasbari ...	37			
Chaygaon ...	Balasidhi ...	9		Batanpur (Kaljira-pura).	
Bagai and Bangaon.	Barpara ...	3	Hastinapur and Bhawanipur.	Bhalaguri ...	4
Luki Bekeli	Bargaon ...	4		Nij Bhawanipur ...	4
Patidaraung...	Malara ...	5	Dumka-chakabausi.	North Ganakgari, Chakabausi and Chakchaka.	10
	Rangmahal ...	3			
	Sindurighopa ...	4			
	Sundari Sal ...	3	Rupsi ..	Madulipar ...	6
Hajo ...	Amlingon ...	10			
	Chesamukh ...	4		Raha ...	4
	Khetalkuchi ...	3			
	Kulkati ...	5			
	Maroa ...	5	Sarukhetri	Serthaibari ...	5
	Nij Hajo ...	17			
Nalbari ...	Nalbari ...	30			
Langia ...	Barijora ..	8			
	Narikuchi ...	3			
	Nij Kowrbaha ...	3			
	Rangia ...	16			
Barama ...	Nij Julki ...	3			
	Nij Khona ...	5			
Tamulpur ...	Baregaon ...	4			
	Dhamdhama ...	5			
	Kachukata ...	3			
	Tamulpur ...	5			

STATEMENT D.
List of markets.

Tahsil or mauza.	Name of place at which market held.	Days of week when held.
<i>Gauhati Subdivision.</i>		
Gauhati	Gauhati town	Every day.
	Moidam hat (Beltola) *	Wednesday and Sunday.
Palasbari	Senabar	Friday.
	Sonapur *	Every eighth day.
	Ajara Gadhuli hat	Every evening.
	Amranga bari hat*	Wednesday.
	Bahupara Raja hat*	Sunday.
	Batar hat*	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Dakhola hat	Monday and Friday.
	Dhuptala hat*	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Gosain hat	Thursday.
	Nahira Noa hat	Wednesday.
Chaygaon	Palasbari hat	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Sarjanpara	Tuesday and Friday.
	Kamarkuchi	Every eighth day.
	Chaygaon*	Thursday and Sunday.
	Nakeri	Wednesday.
Ragai and Bangaon ...	Barduar	Do.
	Harparagaon	Saturday.
Nij Boko and Kharija Boko.	Jangakbuli	Thursday.
Luki and Bekeli	Pukharipara	Saturday.
	Gangrapara	Thursday.
	Habim	Tuesday.
	Singira*	Wednesday.
Patidarang	Mandakata	Sunday.
Hajo	Chaukirhat	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Barni bari	Thursday and Sunday.
	Kalag*	Wednesday and Sunday.
	Maroa*	Tuesday and Saturday.
Nalbari	Nij Hajo	Ditto.
	Baranardi	Thursday and Sunday.
	Nadala	Wednesday and Saturday.
Rangia	Nalbari*	Monday and Friday.
	Rangia*	Thursday and Sunday.
Barama	Sagarkuchi*	Tuesday and Saturday.
	Barama*	Thursday and Sunday.
Tamulpur	Mathurapur*	Monday and Friday.
	Baregaon*	Ditto.
	Dhamdhama*	Saturday and Tuesday.
	Nagri Juli	Friday.
<i>Barpeta Subdivision.</i>		
Bajali	Bhebla (Nowsali hat)*	Tuesday and Saturday.
Dumkachakabausi	Chakchaka*	Tuesday and Friday.
Barpeta	Barpeta bazar	Every day.

* Indicates that the market is leased and the proceeds credited to the Local Board.

STATEMENT E.

List of fairs.

Name of place at which fair is held.	Mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Date at which held.	Estimated number of people attending.
<i>Ga-hari Sub-division.</i>			
Kamakhya ...	Gaubati tahsil ...	January ...	300
		August ...	500
		September ..	500
Umananda ...		Falgun ...	500
Aswakranta ...		Chaitra ...	200
Hajo ...	Hajo tahsil ...	At Magh Domahi ...	4,000 to 4,500
Foelkuchi ...	Do. ...	Asokastomi day ...	Do.
Balisastra ...	Mauza Barigog ...	Kkadashi day of Magh,	5,000
Naogaon ...	Patidarang mauza ...	8th Baisakh ...	500
Khehenipara ...	Barbangsar mauza, Patidarang tahsil.	7th Baisakh ...	500
Balikuchi ...	Patidarang mauza ...	New moon day in the month of Magh.	1,000
Dorakahara ...	Madartola mauza ...	On the 6th day after the new moon of Magh,	Do.
Jagra ...	Pakoa mauza, Nalbari tahsil.	2nd day after the new moon of Magh.	1,200
Bangaon ..	Ditto ...	Durgapuja ...	800
Katra ...	Batasgila mauza, Nalbari tahsil.	2nd day after the new moon of Magh.	1,200
Kakaya ...	Dharmapur mauza, Nalbari tahsil.	9th Baisakh ...	700
Do. ...	Ditto ...	Durgapuja ...	1,000
Balikaria ...	Batasgila mauza, Nalbari tahsil.	11th Baisakh ...	800

STATEMENT E—(concluded).

List of fairs.

Name of place at which fair is held.	Mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Date at which held.	Estimated number of people attending.
Kuihati ...	Dharmapur mauza, Nalbari tahsil.	7th Baisakh ...	200
Darranga ...	Tamulpur tahsil ...	December, January and February.	2,500
Subankhata ...	Ditto	Ditto ...	Do.
Ujanbazar and Cutcherry Compound.	Gauhati tahsil ...	On the Bijaya Dasami day.	3,000
Bileswar ...	Dharmapur mauza ...	7th Baisakh ...	1,000
Do. ...	Ditto ...	Durgapuja ...	2,000
Balilesa ...	Khata mauza ..	8th Baisakh ...	1,200
Balikuchi ...	Ditto ...	During Doljatra ...	1,200
Chandkuchi ...	Bahjani mauza ...	9th Baisakh ...	1,000
Barnadi ...	Pakoa mauza ...	15th Baisakh ...	1,000
Khudra Makhai Baha.	Nambarbhag mauza...	Suklapratipada of Falgun.	2,000 to 3,000
Natun Sripur ...	Paschim Baska Mauza ...	Durgapuja ...	1,000 to 1,500
<i>Barpeta Sub-division.</i>			
Barpeta Kirtan-ghar.	Barpeta ...	Months of Bhadra, Asvin, Falgun or Chaitra, and Baisakh.	1,000 to 3,000
Patbausi Kirtan-ghar.	Do. ...	Baisakh ...	500 to 600
Sarthaibari ...	Sarukhetri mauza ...	Falgun ...	1,000—1,200
Bang ...	Rajali tahsil ..	Magh and Falgun ...	2,000

TABLE I.
Average maximum and minimum temperatures registered at Gauhati.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Year.
Average maximum temperature,	73°·3	78°·0	85°·6	87°·1	87°·4	88°·8	90°·9	89°·8	88°·6	86°·7	81°·1	74°·6	84°·3
Average minimum temperature,	48°·8	52°·7	60°·0	67°·4	71°·9	76°·2	78°·1	77°·9	76°·9	70°·7	60°·3	51°·0	66°·0

Note.—The figures have been compiled on two years' data.

TABLE II.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shown below the name of each station.

Months.		AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.					
		Tamulpur (8 years).	Rangia (13 years).	Barpeta (30 years).	Gauhati (50 years).	Barduar (9 years).	Chaygaon (12 years).
January	...	0.56	0.33	0.48	0.60	0.20	0.35
February	...	1.03	0.91	0.72	0.90	0.77	0.86
March	...	2.79	2.91	2.71	2.47	2.07	2.56
April	...	9.28	6.70	9.26	6.20	6.56	6.41
May	...	14.65	12.37	15.41	9.96	8.89	9.90
June	...	11.42	12.17	19.90	12.34	16.84	13.58
July	...	16.45	13.58	16.89	12.49	18.41	13.77
August	...	12.58	10.46	13.25	10.80	18.95	10.99
September	...	10.23	8.22	11.94	7.68	10.90	7.06
October	...	4.98	3.43	4.39	2.99	4.36	2.99
November	...	0.36	0.16	0.29	0.52	0.34	0.30
December	...	0.44	0.22	0.28	0.24	0.32	0.14
Total of year		84.77	71.46	95.52	67.19	88.61	68.91

TABLE III.
Distribution of population.

Tahsil or Mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Differ- ence.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
Gauhati tahsil ...	46,981	49,394	- 2,413	310.37	151	3,617
Palasbari tahsil ...	48,123	53,283	- 5,160	152.96	314	332
Chaygaon tahsil ...	18,389	19,170	- 781	175.94	104	920
Boko tahsil ...	30,839	33,288	- 2,449	431.66	71	...
Patidarang tahsil ...	53,851	56,412	- 2,561	161.45	333	332
Rangia tahsil ...	61,790	58,818	+ 2,972	193.52	319	...
Tamulpur tahsil ...	28,061	30,575	- 2,514	421.21	66	627
Hajo tahsil ...	68,689	84,269	- 15,580	226.27	303	...
Nalbari tahsil ...	72,370	77,284	- 4,914	117.93	613	...
Barama tahsil ...	44,159	36,051	+ 8,108	140.04	315	...
Barpeta mauza ...	15,550	19,023	- 3,473	122.02	127	...
Bajali tahsil ...	47,425	44,286	+ 3,139	195.53	242	...
Raha tahsil ...	23,530	27,854	- 4,324	245.50	95	...
Sarukhetri mauza ...	7,036	17,998	- 10,962	54.47	129	...
Paka mauza ...	1,384	5,240	- 3,856	55.18	25	...
Chenga mauza ...	4,119	4,834	- 715	44.46	92	...
Bagribari mauza ...	1,575	6,817	- 5,242	182.97	8	...
Hastinapur mauza ...	2,832	2,955	- 123	34.60	81	...
Bijni mauza ...	12,484	6,698	- 5,786	285.64	43	...
Total district ...	589,187	634,249	- 45,062	(a) 3,858.00	153	5,828

(a) The area of the district was furnished by the Assistant Surveyor-General, Calcutta, and does not tally with the sum total of the areas of mauzas, as the latter figures were obtained from the district officer.

TABLE IV.

TABLE IV.
General Statistics of population.

Particulars.	GAUHATI.		BARPETA.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1							
POPULATION 1901	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1891	234,716	288,536	55,153	57,782	589,187	292,869	296,318
1881	250,815	247,729	70,214	65,441	634,249	321,029	313,220
1872	511,930		133,030		644,960	329,061	315,899
VARIATION 1891-1901	217,415	198,048	75,273	70,945	561,681	292,688	288,993
1881-1891	-16,099	-9,193	-12,061	-7,709	-45,062	-28,160	-16,902
1872-1891	-13,896		+2,875		-10,711	-4,032	-2,679
1901	+96,467		-13,188		+83,279	+36,873	+46,906
RELIGION - Total Hindus	159,925	161,236	44,029	42,173	407,363	203,954	203,409

TABLE IV.

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Mahapurashias ...	...	21,733	23,669	16,286	16,167	77,855	38,019	39,836
Other Vaishnavas...	...	124,992	127,006	25,322	24,126	301,446	150,314	151,132
Saktists ...	...	4,161	2,768	374	56	7,359	4,535	2,824
Sivaites ...	...	418	116	30	9	573	448	125
Muhammadans ...	...	24,865	23,895	2,543	2,398	53,701	27,408	26,293
Animistic ...	...	48,442	52,432	11,525	13,200	125,599	59,967	65,632
Total Christians ...	...	798	670	7	4	1,479	805	674
Baptists ...	...	703	592	4	4	1,303	707	596
Other religions ...	...	686	303	49	7	1,045	735	310
CIVIL CONDITION—Unmarried	...	136,193	102,212	34,499	25,093	297,997	170,692	127,305
Married ...	...	87,773	92,970	21,098	22,412	224,253	108,871	115,382
Widowed ...	...	10,750	43,354	2,556	10,277	66,937	13,346	53,631
LITERACY—Literate in Assamese	...	13,719	366	4,026	71	18,182	17,745	437
Literate in English	...	1,355	48	228	1	1,632	1,583	49
Illiterate	...	219,087	237,937	53,721	57,694	568,439	272,808	295,631
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—Assamese	...	195,621	201,729	48,654	45,768	489,762	242,275	247,487
Bodo or Plains Kachari	...	20,619	24,673	10,189	11,772	67,253	30,808	36,445
Mikir ...	...	4,441	3,585	...	...	8,026	4,441	3,585

TABLE V.

TABLE V.
Birth place, race, caste and occupation.

	GAUHATI.		BARPETA.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
I	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
BIRTH PLACE.—Born in district ...	223,153	333,131	56,308	57,240	569,832	279,461	290,371
Born in other parts of Province...	2,656	1,543	638	366	5,203	3,294	1,909
" Chota Nagpur ...	1,348	881	4	1	2,234	1,352	882
" other parts of Bengal...	3,594	1,558	708	55	5,905	4,292	1,613
" United Provinces...	1,082	809	167	21	1,579	1,249	330
" Central Province,	420	340	8	2	770	428	342
" Nepal ...	978	282	225	74	1,559	1,203	356
" Elsewhere ...	1,495	492	95	23	2,105	1,590	515
RACE AND CASTE.—Brahman ...	9,375	9,702	2,024	2,044	28,145	11,399	11,746
Eurasian ...	25	11	...	...	36	25	11
European (a) ...	36	28	...	...	64	36	28
Ganak ...	2,399	2,715	455	479	6,048	2,854	3,194
Garos ...	2,524	2,617	3	...	5,144	2,527	2,617

TABLE V.

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	5,874	6,055	2,762	2,763	17,454	8,636	8,618
Jugi ...	31,849	36,119	11,773	12,863	92,104	43,122	48,982
Kachari ...	44,554	44,208	13,991	12,837	115,500	58,545	57,045
Kalita ...	1,868	1,639	480	335	4,322	2,348	1,974
Kayastha ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kewat, Kaibartta and ...	18,439	20,351	2,976	2,708	44,474	21,415	23,059
Maheshya Vaisya	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kumhar ...	2,865	2,841	480	492	6,678	3,345	3,333
Mikr ...	5,431	5,162	...	...	10,593	5,431	5,162
Nadiyal ...	4,286	4,401	900	921	10,518	5,186	5,222
Namasudra ...	4,531	4,586	839	662	10,618	5,370	5,248
Napit ...	2,121	2,285	311	314	6,031	2,432	2,599
Rabha ...	8,029	8,287	10	5	16,341	8,039	8,302
Rajbansi and Koch	34,636	34,033	12,574	12,710	93,963	47,210	46,743
Saioi ...	3,450	3,603	187	186	7,426	3,637	3,789
Shaha ...	5,257	5,889	1,484	1,440	14,080	6,751	7,329
Tolla ...	3,263	3,400	175	177	7,015	3,438	3,577
OCCUPATION.—Workers	...	...	...	...	295,831	173,204	122,127
Dependents	...	...	...	...	293,856	...	...
Total supported	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Landholder	132,416	132,819	37,237	35,717	333,189	163,653	168,536
Tenants	52,034	54,041	6,086	6,779	118,950	58,120	60,880
Garden coolies	8,295	3,166	124	147	6,732	3,419	3,313
Farm servants	4,945	1,804	1,356	81	8,186	6,301	1,885
Fishermen	4,821	5,227	1,104	947	12,099	5,925	6,174
Grain and pulse dealers	1,311	604	1,579	1,759	5,253	2,890	2,863
General labourers	3,432	1,718	245	212	5,607	3,677	1,930
Mendicants not in connection with religion.	6,096	12,282	1,964	8,625	23,957	8,050	15,907

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE VI.
Vital Statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM—			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel com. plaints.
1901	589,187	31.36	23.04	2.88	0.09	16.97	0.84
1902	589,187	31.71	22.99	2.51	0.15	16.43	1.14
1903	589,187	33.19	22.73	1.83	0.08	16.99	1.23
1904	589,187	29.55	17.81	0.41	0.15	14.22	0.90
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE VII.
Crop Statistics.

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area...	531,276	575,341	601,262	601,597								
Rice	404,459	432,566	450,276	459,610								
Mustard	44,045	57,437	64,790	60,543								
Sugarcane	3,953	5,067	4,366	4,353								
Pulse	18,394	20,173	22,680	22,361								
All other crops	60,525	60,098	59,150	54,730								
TEA.												
Gawhati	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
Number of gardens,	23	19	19	19								
Area in acres	18,642	16,140	16,140	16,898								
(held by	3,419	8,465	3,227	3,400								
Area under { Euro- plant { peas, { held by natives	279	251	250	259								
Outturn in lbs. ...	629,350	542,369	638,089	735,002								
Labour force ...	3,472	3,019	2,155	2,416								
Labourers includ- ing dependents	63	...	48*	131								
imported during the year												

*Henceforth these figures relate to the period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VIII.
Reserved Forests.

Name of reserve.	Area in square miles.	RECEIPTS.											
		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Barjuli	...	50	404	317	850								
Jaipur	...	...	...	40	350								
Nampathar	...	...	...	...	...								
Baradobha	...	...	73	75	486								
Gizang	...	663	298	338	1,138								
Jharikhuri	...	...	45	162	..								
Mugakhal, 284 acres	...	...	...	...	165								
Sursuria Hill	...	300	116	57	20								
Khurkhuri, 149 acres	...	336	84	...	...								
Garubaldha, 280 acres	...	6	...	50	90								
Taraibari	...	271	132	240	322								
Ghoraputa, 120 acres	...	152	...	50	100								

TABLE VIII.

Khatkhati Hill	...	1	110	10	83	176
Khakai Sikrabura	...	4	1,325	599	1,372	1,090
Dumpara	...	1	327	70	351	564
Simla Hill	...	1	107	60	115	130
Dudkhuri, 147 acres	...	...	...	...	10	...
Milmilia	...	7	1,135	617	298	3,672
Chaygaon	...	4	1,159	259	633	2,769
Kulsi Plantation*	...	6	375	195	43	4,046
Mayang	...	8	830	514	865	1,345
Mataikhar	...	4	1,890	1,563	1,482	4,903
Kawasing	...	6	2,049	727	1,208	4,612
Jarasal	...	2	9	...	...	3,054
Hajo, 243 acres	...	...	1	...	17	17
Darranga	...	9	6	1	11	10
Pantan	...	34	3,998	3,375	5,213	3,641
Barduar	...	25	5,833	3,074	4,085	5,299
Rani	...	17	2,184	900	1,692	14,476
Sildar Hill, 127 acres	...	...	...	...	...	...

* Does not include sale proceeds of rubber.

TABLE IX.

TABLE IX.
Fire protection and outturn of timber and value of minor forest products.

Details.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Area under protection sq. miles.	148	149	149	149	149							
Area protected sq. miles ..	140	149	149	149	149							
Percentage ...	95	100	100	100	100							
Cost .. Rs.	1,512	1,468	1,432	1,544	1,544							
Reserved Forests												
Area in sq. miles ...	148	149	149	149	149							
Outturn (Govt. and purchaser only).												
Timber	141,804	98,728	98,582	124,191	124,191							
Fuel c. ft. ...	...	800	552	400	400							
Unclassed Forests.												
Area in sq. miles ...	2,110	2,292	2,306	2,294	2,294							
Outturn (Govt. and purchaser only).												
Timber c. ft. ...	91,458	80,376	69,567	92,101	92,101							
Fuel c. ft. ...	15,672	13,008	15,320	14,732	14,732							
Lac Rs. ...	...	...	414	1,765	1,765							
Rubber Rs. ...	7,430	6,194	1,015	1,179	1,179							
Forest receipts Rs. ...	63,434	49,256	58,781	50,045	50,045							
Forest expenditure Rs. ...	1,707	24,711	38,129	56,819	56,819							
Balance Rs. ...	31,727	24,545	20,652	23,266	23,266							

TABLE X.
Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

			GAUHATI.			BARPETA.		
			Common rice	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.
1880	{	2nd week of February	13	8	18	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	16	8	20	...	...	...
1890	{	Do. do. of February	20	10	20	21½	10	18
		Do. do. of August	15	9	16	18½	10½	18
1900	{	Do. do. of February	19	10	16	23	9½	20
		Do. do. of August	14½	10	13	16	10	13½
1901	{	Do. do. of February	12½	10	12½	12	9½	12
		Do. do. of August	9	10	12½	9	9	12
		Do. do. of February	13½	10	14	14	9	16
1902	{	Do. do. of August	11	10	13	12	9	15
		Do. do. of February	13	10	15	14	9	15
1903	{	Do. do. of August	12½	11	15	16	11	13
		Do. do. of February	16	11	14	20	10	15
1904	{	Do. do. of August	13	11	15	20	11	16
		Do. do. of February	16	11	15	20	12½	16
1905	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1906	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1907	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1908	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1909	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1910	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1911	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...
1912	{	Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION.						
Criminal Justice.						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159	11	8	14	10	8	6
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	6	3	7	6	10	7
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	4	...	1	1	4	3
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333, 335.	7	5	7	6	12	6
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	6	3	5	4	4	1
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	5	1	11	9	14	2
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	3	2	1	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	9	1	13	6	10	3
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	116	15	103	33	125	18
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	6	4	11	9	9	5

XI.

and Civil Justice.

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
Criminal Justice.						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	2	...	...	...	3	...
(xii) Theft sections 379 and 382 ...	146	52	123	79	131	44
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	7	6	28	27	18	16
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448	25	6	12	8	23	6
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	22	6	6	5	6	2
Total ...	375	112	342	203	377	119
BARAKTA SUBDIVISION.						
Criminal Justice.						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159.	2	2	1	...	3	1
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	2	2	1	...	...	...
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 309.	3	...	1	1	1	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333, and 335.	6	4	6	...	2	1

and Civil Justice—(continued).

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(concl'd.)						
Criminal Justice.						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	2	...	...	...	3	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379 and 382 ...	181	70	142	86	152	54
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	11	8	36	33	21	19
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	37	12	20	10	34	12
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	23	6	6	5	6	2
Total ...	474	149	419	222	466	154
Civil Justice.						
Suits for money and moveables ...	1,415		1,554			
Title and other suits ...	59		74			
Rent suits ...	97		129			
Total ...	1,571		1,757			

and Civil Justice—(concluded).

[illegible]

TABLE
Fluctuations in

Proportion of fluctuating area to settled area

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Gauhati Subdivision.				
Settled area	525,509	510,976	522,105	528,123
Area excluded from settlement	45,310	30,300	18,712	18,723
Area included in settlement ...	33,690	35,085	30,329	29,059
Revenue demand Rs. ...	10,33,319	9,78,525	10,01,009	10,14,186
Barpeta Subdivision.				
Settled area	93,705	118,182	125,546	127,097
Area excluded from settlement	28,452	15,477	13,099	15,160
Area included in settlement ..	19,655	20,992	21,675	17,456
Revenue demand Rs. ...	2,04,125	2,20,116	2,32,073	2,36,124
Total district.				
Settled area	619,214	629,158	647,651	655,220
Area excluded from settlement	73,762	45,777	31,811	33,883
Area included in settlement ...	53,345	56,077	52,004	46,515
Revenue demand Rs. ...	12,37,444	11,98,641	12,33,082	12,50,310

XII.

settled area.

in 1903-04 { Gauhati subdivision—9 per cent.
Barpeta subdivision—50 „

1904-05.	Acres.
1905-06.	Acres.
1906-07.	Acres.
1907-08.	Acres.
1908-09.	Acres.
1909-10.	Acres.
1910-11.	Acres.
1911-12.	Acres.

TABLE

Fin

Principal heads.	1890-91.	1900 01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary) ...	9,51,549	11,91,955	11,46,625	12,27,512
" " (miscellaneous) ..	23,502	20,609	26,352	31,896
Provincial rates ...	76,990	84,177	91,869	99,365
Judicial stamps ...	45,553	46,637	49,906	53,288
Non-judicial stamps ...	15,398	14,120	15,236	15,778
Opium ...	1,96,157	1,60,119	1,53,274	1,62,055
Country spirits ...	7,938	17,612	15,379	17,756
Ganja ...	20,977	34,293	30,963	33,381
Other heads of excise ...	843	1,827	1,703	3,062
Assessed taxes ...	12,868	16,110	16,235	14,897
No. of assesses per mille ...	1	1	1	1
Forests ...	54,066	63,434	49,256	48,781
Registration ...	1,239	1,048	1,049	1,373
Total ...	14,07,120	16,51,941	15,97,847	17,19,144

TABLE

Miscellaneous

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902 03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION—				
Fisheries ...	6,502	8,387	11,559	16,543
Total revenue ...	8,623	11,348	13,958	24,429
BARPETA SUBDIVISION—				
Fisheries ...	11,966	14,605	17,845	18,206
Total revenue ...	11,986	15,004	17,938	18,444
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Fisheries ...	18,468	22,992	29,404	34,749
Other heads ...	2,141	3,360	2,492	8,124
Total revenue ...	20,609	26,352	31,896	42,873

ance—(Total collections).

XIV.

land revenue—(Total collections).

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TABLE
Lund

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	498,967	485,297	496,509	502,478
Held on ordinary tenure ...	331,870	336,565	348,778	355,783
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj)...	32,331	32,331	33,129	33,128
Held at half rates (Nisfi-khiraj.)	134,766	116,401	114,602	113,567
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	24,972	24,085	23,978	24,000
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	16,983	16,983	16,983	16,981
Area settled under other special rules.	951	488	488	496
Area settled on 30 years' lease...	5,661	5,274	5,175	5,173
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	1,377	1,340	1,332	1,350
Total land settled under other tenures.	1,570	1,594	1,618	1,645
Total settled area of subdivision ...	525,509	510,976	522,105	523,123
Total unsettled area of ,, ...	1,128,251	1,142,784	1,131,655	1,125,637
BARPETA SUBDIVISION—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	92,739	117,213	124,576	126,116
Held on ordinary tenure ...	76,689	83,087	90,630	92,203
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj)...	779	779	779	779
Held at half rates (Nisfi-khiraj).	15,271	33,347	33,167	33,134
Total land settled under other tenures	966	969	970	981
Total settled area of subdivision ...	93,705	118,182	125,546	127,097
Total unsettled area of subdivision.	721,655	697,178	689,814	688,263
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	591,706	602,510	621,085	628,594
Held on ordinary tenure ...	408,559	419,652	439,408	447,986
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj)	33,110	33,110	33,908	33,907
Held at half rates (Nisfi-khiraj)	150,037	149,748	147,769	146,701
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	24,972	24,085	23,978	24,000
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	16,983	16,983	16,983	16,981
Area settled under other special rules.	951	488	488	496
Area settled on 30 years' lease...	5,661	5,274	5,175	5,173
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	1,377	1,340	1,332	1,350
Total land settled under other tenures	2,536	2,563	2,588	2,626
Total settled area of the district ...	619,214	629,158	647,651	653,220
Total unsettled area of the district	1,849,906	1,839,962	1,821,469	1,813,900

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[illegible]

TABLE XVA.

Settled and unsettled area in tahsils and mauzas in 1903-04.

Name of tahsil or mauza.				Total area.	Settled area.	Unsettled area.
				Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.	Sq. miles.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION.						
Tahsils—	Barama	...	...	140	84	56
	Chaygaon	...	...	176	48	128
	Gauhati	...	...	310	72	237
	Hajo	...	...	226	109	117
	Nalbari	...	...	118	91	27
	Palasbari	...	...	153	72	81
	Patidarang	...	...	163	117	46
	Rangia	...	...	193	127	66
	Tamulpur	...	...	422	50	372
Mauzas—	Bagai Bangaon	...	...	117	11	106
	Boko and Kharija Boko	...	...	86	7	29
	Chamarua (Pub and Paschim,)	...	...	187	21	166
	Luki Bekeli	...	...	92	15	77
Barpeta Subdivision.						
Tahsil—	Bejali	...	...	196	86	110
Mauzas—	Bagribari	...	...	183	4	179
	Barpeta	...	...	119	11	106
	Do. (town)	...	...	1	1	...
Bhawanipur and Hastinapur		...	...	144	32	112
	Bijni	...	...	286	24	262
	Chenga	...	...	44	5	39
Dumkachakabausi		...	...	38	14	24
	Paka	...	...	55	3	52
	Bupai	...	...	98	12	86
	Sarukhetri	...	...	54	7	47

TABLE

Ex-

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
GAUHATI SUBDIVISION—			
Number of opium shops ...	90	89	92
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	22,001	26,098	25,838
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	108 23 15	98 6 11	107 3 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	1,23,804	1,11,910	1,22,066
Number of ganja shops ...	24	24	24
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	12,693	13,960	14,390
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	42 3 0	30 15 8	34 18 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	15,196	10,940	12,402
Number of country spirit shops ...	11	11	9
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	16,868	14,635	17,012
Number of distilleries ...			
Amount of liquor issued ...			
Still-head duty ...			
Number of retail shops ...			
Amount paid for licenses ...			
Other heads of excise revenue ... Rs.	1,685	1,579	2,930
HARPETA SUBDIVISION—			
Number of opium shops ...	20	20	20
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	4,140	3,924	2,552
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	8 36 15	9 37 15	10 7 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	10,174	11,342	11,599
Number of ganja shops ...	7	7	7
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	3,495	3,396	2,708
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	8 26 0	7 16 0	11 29 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	2,909	2,667	3,881
Number of country spirit shops ...	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	744	744	744
Number of distilleries ...			
Amount of liquor issued ...			
Still-head duty ...			
Number of retail shops ...			
Amount paid for licenses ...			
Other heads of excise revenue ... Rs.	142	124	132
TOTAL DISTRICT—			
Number of opium shops...	110	109	112
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	26,141	30,022	28,390
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	117 20 14	108 4 10	117 10 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	1,33,978	1,23,252	1,33,665

TABLE XVI.

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XVI.

cisc.

1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
93 29,902 M. s. ch. 116 29 0 1,33,036 24 15,458 M. s. ch. 32 24 0 12,671 9 17,370 2,517 19 2,556 M. s. ch. 10 1 0 11,429 7 2,545 M. s. ch. 12 36 0 4,384 2 744 152 112 32,458 M. s. ch. 126 29 0 1,44,465								

TABLE

Ex-

Principal heads.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
Number of ganja shops ...	...	31	31	31
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.	16,188	17,356	17,098
		M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued	...	50 29 0	37 31 8	46 7 0
Duty on ganja sold	... Rs.	18,105	13,607	16,283
Number of country spirit shops	...	13	13	11
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.	17,612	15,379	17,756
Number of distilleries	...			
Amount of liquor issued...	...			
Still-head duty	...			
Number of retail shops	...			
Amount paid for licenses	...			
Other heads of excise revenue	...	1,827	1,703	3,062

XVI.

cise—(concluded).

1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
31 18,003 M. s. ch. 45 20 0 17,055 11 18,114 2,669								

TABLE XVII.
Income and Expenditure of Local Boards.
 Gauhati.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	63,561	69,470	Post office ...	2,643	3,893
Police ...	1,718	1,804	Administration ...	265	265
Tolls on ferries ...	4,505	3,818	Education ...	19,238	21,338
Contributions ...	79	...	Medical ...	5,013	10,434
Debt ...	...	719	Civil works ...	32,863	64,716
Miscellaneous ...	116	6,844	Debt ...	...	1,717
			Miscellaneous ...	2,311	2,956
Total ...	69,979	82,655	Total ...	62,333	1,05,324

Barpeta.

Sources of income.	INCOME		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	13,455	14,524	Post office ...	1,332	2,524
Police ...	941	790	Administration ...	127	127
Tolls on ferries ...	1,635	444	Education ...	5,775	5,260
Contributions ...	7,300	8,690	Medical ...	1,291	2,500
Debt ...	...	1,711	Civil works ...	9,609	10,334
Miscellaneous ...	96	211	Debt ...	...	1,693
			Contributions ...	...	3,326
			Miscellaneous ...	1,526	896
Total ...	23,427	26,660	Total ...	19,660	26,660

TABLE XVIII.

*Municipal.**Gauhati Municipality.*

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	1,776	6,781			
Tax on houses and lands.	4,674	7,614	Administration ...	6,398	2,491
Pounds ...	1,690	3,493	Conservancy ...	5,736	14,729
Fees from markets ...	3,764	6,675	Public works ...	1,547	9,705
Grants from Govt. and Local Funds ...		10,000	Public instruction ...	1,552	1,429
Ferry receipts ...	6,995	630			
Water rate ...	5,842	9,943	Water-supply ...	6,900	13,606
Conservancy ...	296	4,183	Other heads ...	3,098	8,342
Other sources ...	910	3,906	Closing balance ...	721	2,923
Total ...	25,947	53,225	Total ...	25,947	53,225

Barpeta Municipality.

Sources of income	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	2,567	14,234			
Tax on houses and lands.	2,027	3,842	Administration ...	767	861
Pounds ...	1,081	982	Conservancy ...	840	2,714
Fees from markets ...	18	302	Public works ...	1,258	2,500
Grants from Govt. and Local Funds ...	500	2,500	Public instruction ...	362	448
Ferry receipts ...	1,784	1,710	Other heads ...	1,266	1,834
Other sources ...	267	355	Closing balance ...	3,761	15,558
Total ...	8,244	23,915	Total ...	8,244	23,915

TABLE XIX.
Strength of Police Force.

Particulars.	1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.			
SUPERVISING STAFF.			
District and Assistant Superintendent ...	1	1	1
Inspectors ...	2	2	2
SUBORDINATE STAFF.			
Sub-Inspectors ...	7	7	11
Head Constables ...	20	30	25
Constables ...	152	252	290
Union and Municipal Police ...	39	...	...
Total expenditure ...	Rs. 43,418	42,943	70,228

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.

As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XX.
Police Stations and Outposts in 1904.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.		SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
		Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
GAUHATI.	Barama O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Boko O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Chaygaon O. P. ...	...	1	6	7
	Gauhati P. S. including Latastil and Bbaralu outposts.	3	...	15	18
	Hajo O. P. ...	2	...	8	10
	Kamalpur O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Nalbari F. S. ...	1	1	10	12
	Palasbari P. S. ...	1	1	10	12
	Rangia P. S. ...	2	...	10	12
BARPETA.	Fonapur O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Tamulpur O. P. ...	1	...	6	7
	Bajali O. P. ...	1	...	8	9
	Barpeta P. S. ...	2	...	14	16
	Raha O. P. ...	1	...	6	7

TABLE XXI.
Jail Statistics.
 Gauhati Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	294	153	199
	Female ...	11	1	1
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	...	111	78	30
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	Rs. 20,251	Rs. 12,604	Rs. 17,682
Cost per prisoner (excluding civil prisoners)*	...	34	38	53
Profits on jail manufactures	...	11,943	5,171	65
Earnings per prisoner (†)	...	39	35	...

Barpeta Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	Male ...	8	7	10
	Female ...	...	...	...
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	...	...	...	98
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	Rs. 1,234	Rs. 905	Rs. 573
Cost per prisoner (excluding civil prisoners)*	...	24	26	32
Profits on jail manufactures	...	355	175	180
Earnings per prisoner (†)	...	57	27	31

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XXII.
Education.

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
COLLEGES.												
Number ...	...	1	1									
Number of boys ...	...	57	72									
Number of boys passing F. A.	...	10	13									
Number of boys passing B. A.	...	...	...									
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.												
<i>High Schools.</i>												
Number ...	3	3	3									
Number of boys reading in High School Classes	125	165	165									
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	134	126	158									
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes.	229	290	277									
<i>Middle English Schools.</i>												
Number ...	3	3	4									
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	59	84	64									

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XXIII.

TABLE XXIII.
Educational Finance.

Particulars.	No. of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM —					Expenditure per head of pupil.
		Provincial reve- nues.	District and muni- cipal funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	
		Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Rs. a. p.
Training and Special Schools	6	3,664	830	115	548	5,157	56 0 10
Secondary Boys' Schools :—							
Upper (High) ...	3	3,910	...	8,379	461	12,750	27 14 4
Lower (Middle) ...	11	2,941	1,947	2,323	733	7,944	9 13 6
Primary Boys' Schools :—							
Upper ...	12	...	1,897	958	366	3,221	5 6 7
Lower ...	62	...	18,465	1,399	333	20,197	2 2 10
Girls' Schools	8	...	1,132	61	43	1,236	5 11 6
Total	302	10,515	24,271	13,235	2,484	50,505	4 6 7

TABLE XXIV.
Medical

Particulars.	GAUHATI.			BARPETA.			TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries	1	5	7	1	2	3	2	7	10
Daily average of indoor patients...	11.74	14.31	23.52	.14	.42	1.78	11.88	14.73	25.30
" " outdoor "	3.53	105.77	139.38	17.86	33.80	80.84	51.39	139.57	220.22
Cases treated	2,523	14,971	37,551	1,365	4,010	14,203	3,887	18,981	51,754
Operations performed	151	411	815	10	95	167	161	506	1,982
Total income	2,419	9,130	18,218	930	3,693	4,169	3,349	12,823	22,387
Income from Government Rs. ...	1,181	1,277	1,920	660	172	190	1,841	1,419	2,110
Income from Local and Municipal Funds	303	5,010	8,464	36	1,502	2,190	339	6,512	10,654
Subscriptions.	750	621	812	...	2.	108	750	643	930
Total expenditure	2,361	9,095	17,977	846	3,348	4,137	3,207	12,443	22,114
Expenditure on establishment Rs. ...	1,436	4,108	5,636	735	780	1,216	2,171	4,888	6,864
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated	Not available.			Do.			(a) 18.12		
Cost per case	Ra. ...			Do.			Not available		
							0 2 7		
							39.99		
							0 2 3		

(a) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE
Dispen-

Name of Dispen- sary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Gauhati...	8,980	13,942	7,912	14,625	5,780	15,468	6,188	17,617	7,022	15,595
Nalbari...	1,881	3,737	1,642	4,573	737	4,450	1,210	5,328	1,134	7,544
Chaygaon	1,788	3,903	1,677	3,902	771	3,732	1,072	4,015	882	4,741
Palasbari	1,967	3,724	1,608	3,943	813	3,566	1,483	4,977	1,351	6,133
Hajo ...	2,003	5,066	1,618	3,586	709	3,669	1,209	3,555	904	4,030
Rangia	1,636	3,434	1,709	3,548	*	8,896	1,165	4,250	1,426	5,201
Boko ...	1,824	2,468	1,811	3,374	903	3,642	1,027	3,329	1,135	3,185
Barpeta...	2,080	6,298	1,832	7,197	1,222	6,474	1,190	11,004	1,312	12,368
Bali ...	1,640	3,145	1,616	3,150	701	3,280	926	3,498	850	3,026
Kaha ...	1,274	3,261	688	3,856	579	5,055	854	5,314	336	1,761

* Correct statistics not furnished.

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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME V.

Darrang.

BY

B. C. ALLEN, C. S.

Allahabad :

PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall found

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Darrang lacks what is generally associated with works of this nature *i. e.* a directory. There is, however, only one town in the district, and that town has been described at length. The great bulk of the population live on tea gardens or in villages which do not lend themselves to a detailed description, and a directory of these villages would be entirely out of place. A list of all the tea gardens and of all villages that are centres of trade has, however, been appended to the volume, and reference has, been made in the text to all villages which are noted for any special industry. It is hardly necessary to add that whenever the Province is referred to it is to the old Province of Assam as constituted in 1904 that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Lees, for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

August 1905.

B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General appearance of district—Hills—Rivers
—Geology—Climate—Earthquakes—Fauna.

The district of Darrang consists of a narrow strip of plain lying between the Himalayas and the Brahmaputra. It lies between $26^{\circ} 12'$ and $27^{\circ} 0' N.$ and $91^{\circ} 42'$ and $93^{\circ} 47' E.$, and is about 130 miles in length. At its eastern extremity the district is only about 12 miles broad. But, in its course towards the sea, the Brahmaputra gradually recedes further from the hills, and at Tezpur it is 28 miles as the crow flies from the northern boundary, while on the extreme west the plain is about 43 miles wide. The total area of the district is thus some 3,418 square miles. To the north, Darrang is bounded by Bhutan, Towang, a province of Thibet, and the hills occupied by the Aka and Dafia tribes. On the east, it adjoins Lakhimpur; on the south, it is separated by the Brahmaputra from Nowgong; and on the west it is bounded by Kamrup.

The Gohpur and Behali mauzas, at the eastern end of the district, are very sparsely peopled. Near the Brahmaputra, there is, as a rule, a belt of marshy country two or three miles in width, where sandy flats are covered with a dense growth of reeds and grass some ten to fifteen feet in height. There is very little tree growth in this region, though an occasional simul (*bombax malabaricum*) is to be seen; but here and there

Dimensions
and bound-
aries.

The eastern
end of the
district.

amongst the jungle are to be found *bils*, and stretches of rich grazing ground (*dolonis*) in which the cattle can wade knee deep in luscious grass. Near the trunk road, there are patches of cultivation, but there are places where for a considerable distance this great thoroughfare is shut in on either side by a wall of jungle. Further north the level rises, and the country lying at the foot of the hills is covered with dense ever-green forest.

The Bishnath plain.

West of Behali comes the Bishnath plain, an elevated region which is of older geological formation than the other parts of the district. The high bank reaches right down to the Brahmaputra, without the intervening belt of inundated land, and the plain itself is too high for the growth of transplanted rice, so that most of it is covered with short turf. The forest still stretches along the foot of the hills, but a portion of it has been cleared and planted out with tea, and the lower land is green with waving rice.

The country between Chutia and Orang.

Between Chutia and the Bhareli there is a good deal of cultivation, and the typical scenery of Assam is to be seen. Rice is grown in great stretches or *pathars*, round which are placed the houses of the cultivators; though it is not houses that one sees but the groves of feathery bamboos, slender palms, and broad-leaved plantains in which they are embedded. West of the Bhareli there is little but jungle till Tezpur itself is reached. Between Tezpur and the Gabharu civilization again reasserts itself, and near the town the country is one stretch of rice fields. Further north the forest has been felled and magnificent tea gardens

opened on the higher land, but west of the Gabharu population again falls off. Here and there are patches of cultivation, but there are wide stretches of jungle—forest near the hills, high reeds and elephant grass along the Brahmaputra, and shorter grass in the centre of the plain.

In Mangaldai the country falls into three natural divisions. Near the Brahmaputra there are jungle covered flats, on which the villagers raise crops of summer rice, pulse, and mustard. Further inland as the level rises, there is a rich expanse of rice land dotted over with groves of bamboos and palm trees; while to the north there is the high land inhabited by Kacharis, and now, to some extent, planted out with tea. It is a pleasant country which the Kacharis have selected for their home. The plain is covered with short springy turf, and, if in places the jungle is too high to allow a horseman to ride through it, it at any rate serves the useful purpose of affording cover to the partridge and the florican. A few miles to the north the mountains rise like a wall from the dead level of the plain, and in the winter time, the tops of the highest peaks are often flecked with snow. The soil is light and sandy, the roads are generally covered with short grass, and the traveller, as he makes his way along this upland country, frequently finds himself splashing through the fords which cross the numerous rivers that come hurrying from the hills. The Kachari villages are situated on the higher ground, but the pig-keeping propensities of their occupants are fatal to the

growth of trees, and, instead of being buried like the houses of the Assamese in a dense dankery of foliage, they stand up sharp and clear against the sky.

The whole of the district has much to appeal to the lover of the picturesque. To the south flows the mighty Brahmaputra, which, when rolling along in flood, seems more like a lake than a mere river. On the further bank the view is bounded by the Mikir Hills and the outlying portions of the Assam Range whose forest-clad sides shut in the plain with a soft blue wall. Along the north there is a wall of mountains. On the extreme east the outer range is but some 3,000 feet in height, but north of Tezpur, there is a hill not far beyond the frontier, whose summit is nearly 12,000 feet above the level of the sea. This, however, is as nothing in comparison with three mountains, ranging from 21,000 to 23,000 feet in height, whose snowy peaks stand out sharply in the cold blue sky of a winter's day, and make a fitting background to a charming scene.

**Mountain
system.**

Though in most parts of the district the view on a clear day is bounded on either side by hills, there are no hills or mountains of any size within the actual frontiers of Darrang. The most considerable range is a small spur projecting from the Himalayas into the north of the Balipara mauza, round which the Bhareli makes its way into the plains. Two low hills in this range, Bhalukpang and Gosainloga, will be referred to in the following chapter, as the ruins of old forts have been found here buried in the jungle. Along the river front, near the station of Tezpur, there is a range of low hills

whose summits are from 300 to 450 feet above sea level. West of the steamer ghat is the Auguri Parbat, at whose foot is the small shrine of Bhairab Pod, and beyond it is the Dhenukhana hill, on which there are the ruins of stone buildings. East of Tezpur, there is the Bamuni hill on which are the remains of the magnificent stone temple described in the following chapter, while beyond it is the Bhairabi hill, where there is a small shrine sacred to Bhairabi Debi. Close by is a hillock which bears the ominous name of Manukata, for here, tradition has it, human sacrifices were offered in the days of native rule. A little to the east are the Bhomoraguri hills, and beyond them the Rudrapod, so called because in the bed of the Brahmaputra close by there is a rock bearing the imprint of Siva's (Rudra's) footprint. North of the Rudrapod is the Samdhara hill, on which, in Ahom days, there was a temple. At the south-east corner of the Barchola mauza is the Singri hill, famous for a temple revered by Hindus and Buddhists alike, and, near the Brahmaputra in the Patharughat tahsil, there are eight or nine low hills, on one of which there is a shrine sacred to Ganesh. The only other hills which are found within the district are a few low spurs right on the northern frontier of Mangaldai.

The principal river of Darrang is the Brahmaputra, which flows right along its southern boundary. Even at this distance from its mouth, the Brahmaputra is an enormous river, and, during the rains, there is an unbroken stretch of water, about four miles in width, from Tezpur to the main bank of Nowgong. This is, however,

Rivers : the
Brahma-
putra.

partly due to the fact that to see the main bank it is necessary to turn to some extent upstream, as a huge sand bank, or *chur*, has formed opposite the town. These *churs* are a peculiar and somewhat objectionable feature in the river. Its waters come down loaded with sand and other matter in suspension, and a slight obstruction in the channel is sufficient to cause the sand to be deposited. In an incredibly short space of time an almond-shaped bank appears, which sometimes is washed away by the next flood, sometimes remains to form a considerable island. After a short time these islands are covered by a dense growth of jungle grass, and the main stream of the river not unfrequently changes its course, and shifts from side to side of the broad and sandy strath through which it makes its way.

The Bhare-
li.

The largest river in Darrang itself is the Bhareli, which rises in the Aka Hills and enters the district just to the north of Bhalukpang. It first flows east between two ranges of hills, and then turns sharply to the south, and flows a tortuous course to the Brahmaputra, which it joins about seven miles east of Tezpur town. The gorge through which the river makes its way is of great natural beauty. The hills covered with forest rise steeply from the water's edge, and the noble river hurries on over its rocky bed, now dashing down a rapid and foaming and boiling round a sunken rock, and anon lingering in still deep pools where the mahseer love to lie.

In its course through the plains the Bhareli, not unfrequently, overtops its banks, and, for the greater part of its way, it flows through jungle land. Its principal

tributaries are, on the left bank, the Upper, Khari, and Bar Dikrai, all of which come to it from the hills, and none of which flow for any distance through British territory. On the right bank there are the Upper and Lower Sonai and the Mansiri, which has numerous feeders from the Bhalukpang range. The Bhareli used originally to fall into the Brahmaputra close by the town of Tezpur, but some time prior to our occupation of the Province, it changed its course and shifted about five miles further east.

In addition to the Bhareli there are numerous other ^{other} rivers which carry off the drainage of the hills into the Brahmaputra. In the Gohpur mauza the principal stream is the Dubia or Kharo, which flows a southerly and westerly course down to the great river. Its largest tributary is the Balijan. The Behali mauza is watered by the Burai and the Bargang, both of which are considerable rivers; and between the two there is a large number of small streams, or jans, which unite and fall into the Brahmaputra near Behali. In the Chutia tahsil there are no rivers of great size, and the largest streams are the Sadharu, the Ghiladhari, and the Dikrai. West of Tezpur the drainage south of the hills is collected in a small stream called the Dipota, then comes the Sonarupa or Gabharu, the Pachnai, the Dhansiri and the Mangal-dai river with its tributary the Noanadi; while on the extreme west, the Barnadi forms for a considerable part of its course the boundary between Darrang and Kamrup. All of these rivers flow a tortuous southerly course from the hills towards the Brahmaputra, and all of them are

fed by numerous minor streams, most of which rise inside the district boundary and collect the local drainage. The banks of all these rivers are alternately abrupt and sloping, as the current sets from one side to the other and cuts away the bank where it impinges. The channels are usually sandy, and, during the dry season, all except the Bhareli, the Dhansiri and the Barnadi are fordable. Care must, however, be exercised in essaying the passage, as quicksands occasionally form in the river bed. Like most hill streams they are subject to strong freshets, and after heavy rain the traveller is liable to be stopped by a sudden rise in the river. The Barnadi, Dhansiri, and Noanadi have all, like the Bhareli, changed their courses of recent years, and the villagers do not, as a rule, care to settle in the immediate proximity of the river. The result is that the banks are generally covered with high jungle grass. In the north of Mangaldai, some of the streams which issue from the Himalayas disappear for a time in the light sandy soil, and do not develop a regular channel till they have advanced some distance into the plain. The extent to which these rivers are used as trade routes is described in the section on communications.

**Bils and
marshes.**

There is a steady fall in the level of the district towards the Brahmaputra, and there is thus but little tendency for the drainage of the country to collect in lakes and marshes. In the whole of the *sadr* subdivision there are only three *bils* of sufficient size to justify their being sold as public fisheries, and in Mangaldai there are but six. These *bils* are shallow pools of no great extent which

form in depressions in the lower parts of the district, generally near the Brahmaputra. In the cold weather they are usually surrounded by a belt of rich green grass which affords the most splendid grazing, and the whole is shut in by a wall of high reeds and elephant grass some ten or fifteen feet in height.

Almost the whole of the district consists of an alluvial **Geology.** deposit of clay and sand in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to a clay so stiff that it is quite unfit for cultivation. The Bishnath plain and an elevated tract of land north of Tezpur known as the high bank are, apparently, the remains of an older alluvium which elsewhere has disappeared. The soil is here distinguished from that of the rest of the plain by its closer texture and reddish colour. The low hills near the Brahmaputra are of gneissic origin, and are largely composed of rocks which make an excellent building stone. Limestone of an inferior quality is found in the Barnadi, and travertine, containing as much as 90 per cent of lime, has been discovered just beyond the British frontier in the beds of the Nanai and Dhansiri rivers. Coal, also, is known to exist outside the northern boundary, in the gorges of the Bargang and the Dikal, but not, it is believed, in valuable quantities or of good quality*. In the days of native rule gold used to be washed from the sands of the Bhareli, the Burai, and the Dhansiri, and it is said that each man would obtain about one ounce of gold in the three months, November to

* Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. I, p. 103.

January, during which the work was carried on. Almost as soon as the district came under British rule, the gold washers abandoned this special work, which had been entrusted to them by the Ahom Rajas, and it is said that even in 1835 very little gold was washed for, in pite of a strong demand for the precious metal*. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Bhutias are said to have brought down as much as 200 ounces of gold every cold weather, but practically no gold is exported from the hills along the north at the present day.

Climate.

The climate of Darrang does not differ materially from that of the rest of Assam Proper. From the middle of November till the end of February the weather is all that could be desired. The total rainfall during that period is only about two inches, the sky is clear, the sun, though bright, has little power, and the air is cool and pleasant. In March the temperature begins to rise, but the copious showers of April, when six or seven inches of rain are usually recorded, effectually prevent the development of anything in any way resembling the hot weather of Upper India. Between May and September the rainfall is fairly heavy, the air becomes surcharged with moisture, and the damp heat is trying alike to Europeans and to natives. The average maximum shade temperature of these five months ranges from 86 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, but, in an excessively humid atmosphere, even such a moderate degree of heat has a relaxing effect upon the constitution. In October, the temperature begins to fall and the nights are fairly cool, but

* Lieutenant Mathie's report, para. 72. Ditto, para. 33.

the winter does not actually set in till the middle of November. The average maximum and minimum temperature in each month will be found in Table I.

The average monthly rainfall at certain stations will be found in Table II. Near the hills, at Kherkheria on the west and at Gohpur on the east of the district, it is over 100 inches, while at Mangaldai it is only 70 and at Tezpur 73 inches. About two-thirds of the total rainfall of the year falls in the four months, May to August.

Darrang suffers little from destructive storms and floods. The Brahmaputra and many of its tributaries occasionally overflow their banks, but the area subject to inundation is well known, and the villagers do not attempt to cultivate anything more than summer rice or cold weather crops in these flooded tracts. Hail storms occasionally do damage, especially on tea gardens, but destructive cyclones are quite unknown. Thunder storms are common in the rains, but they afford a welcome relief by cooling the overheated atmosphere. Dust storms never occur, as the country is so completely clothed in fresh green vegetation, that dust, the material of these unpleasing phenomena of nature, is not forthcoming.

But Darrang, like the rest of Assam, is a seismic area, and the crust of the earth from time to time gives evidence of its instability. The Ahom chronicles not unfrequently refer to serious earthquakes; and the army advancing under Mir Jumla to the invasion of Assam was much alarmed by the occurrence of one of these cataclysms of nature.

**The earth-
quake of
1897.**

The most serious earthquake on record was, however, the one which occurred on June 12th, 1897. This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon in the south-east to Kangra in the north-west, from the Himalayas to Masulipatam, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles*. The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintiapur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The effects of the shock in Mangaldai were serious. The dak bungalow and the residence of the Subdivisional Officer were wrecked, the walls of the cutchery and the treasury collapsed, and serious damage was done to the raised roads, which in places were shaken down to the level of the neighbouring fields. In Tezpur itself the dak bungalow, the Deputy Commissioner's bungalow, and the Planters Club were all seriously injured. The greater part of the northern and western walls of the jail were thrown down, the eastern wall of the church collapsed, and the treasury and cutchery both were injured. On the Tezpur-Balipara Railway the permanent way between Sessa and Rangapara was in places shaken level with the plain, and the rails were bent and twisted out of position. Fortunately, however, no loss of life occurred, and the actual damage done was small in comparison with the terrible ruin wrought in Gauhati and Shillong.

Fauna.

The wild animals of the district include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards,

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIX, p. 52.

bears, wild pig and different kinds of deer, of which the principal varieties are the sambar (*cervus unicolor*), the *barasingha* or swamp deer (*cervus duraucei*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*) and the spotted deer (*cervus axis*).

Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills, **Elephants.** and when the crops are ripening do much damage unless the numbers of the herds are regularly kept down. For this purpose the district is divided into seven mahals or tracts. The right to hunt in each mahal is sold by auction and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well-trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors

who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed.

Forty-six animals were caught in 1902-03, the last year in which the mahals were sold by the Deputy Commissioner. Rhinoceros live in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra, or near the hills, and are now extremely scarce. They breed slowly, and, as the horn is worth more than its weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. Wild buffaloes are occasionally found in the same locality, and wild bulls sometimes serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese on the Brahmaputra *churs*. Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1903, are said to have accounted for over four thousand head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows:—Elephants 2, tigers 12, bears 9, wild buffaloes 6, wild pigs 5, snakes 14, total 48. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 30 tigers, 66 leopards, and 17 bears.

Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, pheasants, jungle fowl, and hares.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Summary—The Kingdom of Kamarupa—Ban Raja—Pratapa and Arimatta—Identity of Tezpur with capital of Pala kings—The Koch kings—History of Darrang Rajas—The Ahoms—Koch and Muhammadan invasions—The Ahom kings—The Moamaria insurrection—Annexation of Assam by the British—Ahom government and social life—Frontier relations—History of the district under British administration—The Patharughat riots—Archæological remains—Chronological table.

It is doubtful whether at any period the whole of the **Summary.** country, which is now known as the district of Darrang, was a separate polity under its own ruler, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various States of which from time to time it formed a part. It was originally included in the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamarupa, which is mentioned in the Mahabharata, and which at one time occupied North-Eastern Bengal, and a great part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. The story of this kingdom dating, as it presumably does, from about the twelfth century B. C. is largely a matter of doubtful and fragmentary tradition, and we can hardly be said to know much of the history of Darrang before the beginning of the sixteenth century A. D., when it was incorporated in the territories of the Koch princes. The decline of the Koch kingdom was, however, as rapid as its rise, and at the beginning of the

seventeenth century the Ahoms, who had been called in to assist the Koch Raja against the Muhammadans, began to strengthen their hold upon the district. It is doubtful, moreover, whether at any time the sovereignty of the Koch kings extended to the east of the Bhareli, since, as far back as 1523, the Ahoms established a colony of Chutiyas on the left bank of that river. The Bhareli at this time seems to have been the western boundary of the Ahom territories on the north bank, as, in 1529, the Ahom king is said to have taken up his headquarters at Bishnath, and to have ordered his generals to plunder the country on the west of the Bhareli. The historian of Mir Jumla's invasion in 1661 refers to the Koch Raja of Darrang as a tributary of the Ahom king, and, in 1725, his territories only consisted of that portion of the Mangaldai subdivision which lies south of the Gohain Kamala Ali. When the Ahom power was shaken to its very foundations by the Moamaria insurrection, the Raja of that time, Krishna Narayan, endeavoured to assert his independence; but he was defeated in 1792 by Captain Welsh, and reduced again to the position of a tributary chief. From that time forward, Darrang continued under the rule of the Ahoms, as far as any form of rule can be said to have existed in that period of anarchy and confusion, and passed, with the rest of Assam, into the hands of the British when the Burmese were driven out of the valley in 1825.

The kingdom of Kamarupa. According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river, on the 1200 B. C. western boundaries of Rangpur, to the Dikrai in the 1000 A.D.

east of the Darrang district. It was divided into four portions, *i. e.*, Kamapith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh; Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi; Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli; and Saumarpith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa of whom anything in particular is recorded is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak. He established his capital at Pragjyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though somewhat headstrong, prince. He was appointed the guardian of Kamakhya, and his name still lives amongst the people as the builder of the causeway up the southern face of the hill Nilachal, on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. He was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas at the great battle of Kurukshetra; and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Darrang formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

It is not Narak, however, but Ban Raja whose name **Ban Raja.** is most frequently in the mouths of the people of Darrang. Tradition says that his fortress stood on the site now occupied by the Deputy Commissioner's office, and that he built the magnificent temples, the ruins of which are still to be seen in the immediate vicinity of the town. His daughter was beloved by Anirudha, son of Krishna, and when Ban seized the amorous prince, he was

rescued by his father, who fought a bloody battle on the plain to the west of Tezpur.

Two large tanks in the neighbourhood are said to have been constructed by Ban, and one of them still bears the name of his prime minister Kumbhanda. The Akas to this day claim descent from this mighty prince, through his grandson Bhaluka, the remains of whose capital are still to be seen in the gorge of the Bhareli at Bhalukpang. Tezpur is not, however, the only town that claims to have been Ban Raja's capital. Similar pretensions are put forward for a place called Ban Raja's garh, a little to the south of Dinajpur. Local tradition, which in a matter of this kind is of very little value, is the only authority for connecting Ban Raja with the magnificent temple ruins near Tezpur; and local tradition in this particular instance would seem to contradict itself, as it seems fairly clear that the fort at Bhalukpang and the temple at Tezpur cannot have been erected by the same dynasty or at the same period.

The copper plates of the eleventh century.

Further information with regard to the rulers of Kamarupa is given in certain copper plates which on palaeographical grounds have been assigned to the eleventh century A. D.* These plates are valuable evidence as to the state of the country at the time at which they were engraved, but their account of the genealogy of the reigning king must obviously be received with some degree of caution. The dynasty of Narak is said to have been displaced by Cala Stambha, a Mleccha or foreign con-

* For a description of these plates see J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVI, pp. 113 and 285, and Vol. LXVII, Pt. I, No. 1, p. 99.

queror, whose line ended in the person of Sri Harisa. Another family of foreign princes then came to the throne, the first of whom was Pralambha and the last Tyaga Singh. The dynasty of Narak was then restored in the person of Brahmapala. The invasion of the Mlecchas and their subsequent expulsion not improbably corresponds with the great irruption of the Bodos, who, according to their own traditions, were at one time ruling at Gauhati and were subsequently driven eastwards to Dimapur, but the whole of this period is involved in great obscurity.

In 640 A. D. Hiuen Tsiang visited Assam, and the record of his travels affords a momentary glimpse of the conditions of the country; a glimpse which is not unlike the view afforded by a flash of lightening on a dark and stormy night. The landscape, which has been shrouded in impenetrable gloom, is suddenly disclosed to view, and with equal rapidity is engulfed again in the blackest darkness; and nothing definite is known of the fortunes of Assam and its inhabitants either immediately before or after the visit of the great Chinese traveller. The country seems to have advanced some distance on the path of civilization. The soil was deep and fertile, the towns surrounded by moats, the people fierce in appearance but upright and studious. Hinduism was the national religion, and, though Buddhism was not prohibited, its milder tenets had comparatively few followers.

Two other names, those of Pratapa and Arimatta, are connected with the legendary history of Darrang.

**The visit of
Hiuen
Tsiang, 640
A. D.**

**Pratapa
and
Arimatta.**

Pratapa is said to have belonged to the Nagsankar dynasty, who reigned between the third and seventh centuries A. D., though, as will subsequently be shown, very little reliance can be placed upon these dates. Pratapa's capital was situated at Ratnapur, which was subsequently engulfed by the Brahmaputra when it changed its course to form the Majuli; but he built a great fort at Pratapgarh, the remains of which are to be seen at the present day. Another story says that Pratapa and Bhaluka were the same, and that he received the latter name because he was begotten by Siva, in the form of a bear (*bhaluk*), on the daughter of a Kachari prime minister, who had fled to the north bank of the Brahmaputra to escape from the oppressions of his royal mistress. The girl was afterwards married by Somapal, the king of the country, who made her son his heir.

Arimatta. Arimatta is said to have been the grandson of Pratapa, or, according to another account, the son of Pratapa's wife who had been raped by the Brahmaputra. He seems to have been a powerful prince, and is said to have thrown up the huge entrenchment which is still to be seen near Betna in Kamrup. The Majuligarh, in the Chutia mauza, is also attributed to him. He killed his father either accidentally out hunting, or in open war in ignorance of his identity, and attempted to make atonement by offering gold and jewels at Jagannath and also to the Ganges. His offerings were rejected, and he finally threw them into the waters of the Dikho and then drowned himself. According to another legend, he

was accidentally shot by his son Jangal, whose capital was situated in Nowgong. The obscurity in which the history of this time is veiled can, however, be measured from the fact that, while Pratapa's dynasty is said to have ended in the seventh century A. D., Arimatta is said to have lived in the thirteenth.

We are, however, treading upon more certain ground when dealing with the Bargaon plate, which on the evidence of palæography has been assigned to the earlier half of the eleventh century A. D. It records the grant of a piece of land on the north bank of the Brahmaputra to a Brahman, and extols the virtues and magnificence of the donor, King Ratnapala, the son of the Brahmapala, in whose person the line of Narak had been restored to the sovereignty of Kamrup.

The Bargaon plate of the eleventh century.

Ratnapala seems to have been a powerful prince, and his capital Durjaya on the Luhit is described in glowing terms. It was crowded with soldiers and merchants, and adorned with learned men, priests, and poets. A thousand plastered turrets hid the sun, and the strength of its ramparts were a source of mortification, or, as the inscription quaintly puts it, "pulmonary consumption," to various other mighty chiefs. The king studded the earth with his whitewashed temples and the pillar monuments of his victories. He was evidently no mere local princeling, as he obtained great wealth from his copper mines; and there are no copper mines anywhere in the neighbourhood of Tezpur. Considerable allowance has to be made for the exuberance of the oriental imagination, but the precise injunctions issued to

the "people of the Brahman and other castes, headed by the *district revenue officers and their clerks*," with regard to the actual grant of land, suggest a systematic and well-organized Government. Similar conclusions are to be drawn from the following description of the land itself and of its easements. "Be it known to you that this land, together with its houses, paddy-fields, dry land, water, cattle-pastures, refuse-lands, etc., of whatever kind it may be, inclusive of any place within its borders, and freed from all nuisances on account of the fastening of elephants, the fastening of boats, the searching for thieves, the inflicting of punishments, the tenants' taxes, the imposts of various causes, and the pasturing of animals, such as elephants, horses, camels, cattle, buffaloes, goats and sheep, as set forth in this charter, is given to him for the sake of the good and the glory of my father and myself."

**Durjaya
possibly
identical
with
Tezpur.**

It seems far from improbable that Durjaya was located on the site of the present station of Tezpur. It was situated on the banks of the Brahmaputra, and the number of places in which a city could be built in the neighbourhood of that treacherous and shifting river is not large. The town was evidently not identical with Gauhati, as Ratnapala is distinctly described as being the lord of Pragjyotisha (Gauhati) but as living at Durjaya; and it seems much more likely that Durjaya was situated at Tezpur than at Silghat or Bishnath, two of the few places in the valley where the rocks come down to the river's edge. If this is so, the magnificent stone temple, east of Tezpur, was probably constructed

by one of these Pala kings about the eleventh century A. D., and to this dynasty must be assigned the fine masonry remains which are still lying about the station in great profusion. These pillars and blocks of massive stone, which are enriched with fine carving, must evidently have been executed under the orders of a powerful prince, in whose capital the arts of civilization had made considerable progress, and this is a description which could not unsuitably be applied to the Pala kings.* It is a somewhat humiliating reflection that a thousand years ago the material civilization of Tezpur seems to have been in many respects much in advance of that in existence at the present day, when neither artisans, merchants, or learned men are to be found amongst the Assamese. But the Pala princes, with their power and magnificence, passed away many centuries before the British obtained possession of Assam, and Darrang became for a time a sort of debatable land partly under Koch and partly under Ahom rule.

Little or nothing is known of the decline of the Pala **The Koch** kings of Durjaya, and it is doubtful whether Darrang **kings.** ever formed part of the territories of the Khyen kings of Kamatapur in Kuch Bihar, the last of whose line, Nilambar, was conquered by the Muhammadans in 1498 A. D. In the sixteenth century, the eastern portion of

* Pala is a common title and it should be noted that these princes were not necessarily connected with the Pala kings of Bengal. An anonymous writer in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XLV, p. 521, suggests that the Tezpur temple may have been erected by Lalitaditya, a king of Kashmir, who, he says, invaded Assam in the middle of the eighth century A. D. This is, however, a mere hypothesis, which *prima facie* seems to be most improbable.

the district seems to have passed under the influence of the Ahoms, while west of the Bhareli the Koches were the dominant power.

The founder of the Koch kingdom was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who according to tradition was the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces.* Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes, who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar and reduced his state to order. The whole population was divided up into different corps under officers of increasing dignity, a *thakuria* being appointed over every 20 coolies, a *saikia* over every 100, a *hazari* over 1,000, an *umra* over 3,000, and a *nawab* over 66,000. He took a census of his subjects and found that the number capable of bearing arms was 5,225,000, an obvious exaggeration. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat, but the Ahom version which states that he was defeated and made tributary seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition.

War
Narayan,
1534-1584
A. D.

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A. D. by his son Malla Deva, who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or

* The following account of the Koch kingdom and the Darrang Rajas is taken from an interesting paper on the Koch kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C. S., Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume LXII, Part I, No. 4 of 1893.

Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but, mindful of his father's failure, commenced his operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it. The work was entrusted to his brother Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon (the modern Nazira) and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Kachari Raja and the Raja of Manipur were then reduced to the position of feudatory chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan would not, however, accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king.

Within the space of two generations the Koch kingdom had attained to an extraordinary height of power and prosperity, but its decline was as rapid as its rise. For a long time Nar Narayan had no male offspring, and Silarai's son, Raghu Rai, was regarded as his heir. When this boy was approaching manhood, one of his uncle's wives gave birth to a son called Lakshmi Narayan,

**Decline of
Koch King-
dom,
Raghu Rai,
1581-1593
A. D.**

and Raghu Rai, realizing that he had now no hope of succeeding to the throne, withdrew from the capital to Barnagar in the Barpeta subdivision of Kamrup. Nar Narayan endeavoured to compel him to return, but his soldiers were defeated and the king weakly resolved to divide his kingdom.* The territory east of the Sankosh was made over to Raghu Rai, while Lakshmi Narayan received the part that lay west of that river. Raghu Rai continued to reside at Barnagar, and seems to have been much devoted to religious exercises.

**Parikshit,
1593-1614
A. D.**

He was succeeded by his son Parikshit in 1593 A. D. who built a town at North Gauhati, and mounted cannon at Pandunath. War then broke out between Parikshit and his cousin Lakshmi Narayan † The latter was defeated but called in the Muhammadans to his aid, and on their arrival the situation was reversed. Mukarram Khan advanced with 6,000 horse, 12,000 foot, and 500 ships and took Parikshit's fort at Dhubri. The Koch king then essayed a naval engagement on the Gadadhar river, but was defeated, and retreated to Barnagar, where he surrendered in 1614 A.D., and was sent to the court of the Mughal Emperor.

His brother Bali Narayan, or Baldeo as he is called by the Muhammadan historians, fled to the Ahoms, and the struggle between the two powers continued for some

* According to Buchanan Hamilton, the kingdom was founded by Hajo, father of Hira and grandfather of Viswa Singh, and divided by Viswa Singh who allotted the portion east of the Sankosh to Sukladwaj or Silasai, and that west of the river to Nar Narayan. On general grounds, however, this account seems to be less probable than that given in the body of the text.

† According to one version the quarrel dated from the time of Raghu Rai who declined to pay tribute after the death of Nar Narayan, and set up his own mint, Buranji No. 6, p. 123.

years with varying success. Ultimately the Koch king was completely crushed and he died at Singri in 1637 A.D.

From this time onward the power of the Darrang* **Bali Narayan, 1614-1637. Subsequent history of Darrang Rajas.** Rajas steadily declined. Bali Narayan was succeeded by his son, Mahendra Narayan, who died in 1643. His son, Chandra Narayan, reigned till 1660, and was followed by his son, Surya Narayan, who is said to have been defeated by the Muhammadans in 1682, and taken captive to Delhi. The Raja's minor brother, Indra Narayan, was placed upon the throne, and during his reign the Ahoms strengthened their hold upon the district. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the country was surveyed under the orders of Sib Singh, with a view, no doubt, to the more precise assessment of tribute. When Indra Narayan's son, Aditya Narayan, succeeded in 1725, his kingdom had been reduced to the portion of the Mangaldai subdivision which lay south of the Gohain Kamala Ali, and a considerable part even of this small principality was wrested from him by his younger brother.

In 1792 A.D., when the Ahom kingdom was dis- **Krishna Narayan revolts and is deposed.** tracted by the bloody insurrection of the Moamarias, and when the king, Gaurinath, had been driven to Gauhati and was, as he himself expressed it, "like a laden boat in the act of sinking," Krishna Narayan, the Raja of Darrang, endeavoured to assert his independence. He hired sepoys from Bengal, and took up a position on the

* This is the name by which they are generally known, but as a matter of fact the Darrang Rajas never seem to have ruled over the eastern part of the Darrang district.

north bank of the Brahmaputra in the neighbourhood of Gauhati. He was, however, easily defeated by Captain Welsh, who had been sent to the assistance of the Ahom Raja, and in 1805 was deposed by Kamaleswar Singh, Gaurinath's successor, at a ceremony for which he seems to have been somewhat unfairly required to pay a fee of Rs. 120.* Samudra Narayan, a descendant of the same family, was appointed in his place, and was warned by the Ahom Raja that he must cherish the people entrusted to him, assist them in their troubles, and not look upon them as the mere instruments of his pleasure and the sources from which his revenue was drawn. He was also ordered to protect his frontier against the aggressions of the Bhutias, and was told to apply to the Ahom ministers for assistance, if he found himself unequal to the task imposed upon him.

**Darrang
Rajas sink
to the posi-
tion of
samindars.**

Later on, the position of the Darrang Rajas was still further reduced, and instead of being tributaries, they were merely the agents of the Ahom king. In lieu of salary they were allowed the lands cultivated by their personal slaves and servants, which were confirmed to them at half the ordinary rates of revenue when the British came into occupation of the country. This privilege attached, however, to the Raja, and not to the land itself, and if he alienated any portion of his estates it became at once liable to assessment at full rates.

The Ahoms. In the preceding paragraphs it has been shown that the power of the Koches was not at any time firmly established in the east of Darrang, and it is doubtful

* Buranji No. 9.

whether, even in Mangaldai, they could properly be described as independent princes after the death of Bali Narayan in 1637 A. D. It is, in fact, to the Ahoms that we must look for the seat of real sovereignty, during the three hundred years that preceded the cession of the Brahmaputra Valley to the British in 1826. These people were a Shan tribe from the kingdom of Pong in the upper valley of the Irawadi, who, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, crossed the Patkai and settled in the south of the territory which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The country at the foot of the hills was occupied by tribes of Morans and Borahis whom they easily subdued, and who were absorbed by intermarriage with their conquerors. To the west and north, however, they were confronted by far more powerful nations. Upper Assam was ruled by the Chutiyas, a tribe of Bodo origin, who are believed to have entered the valley from the north-east and to have conquered the Hindu kings whom they found in possession of the country. On the west there was the strong Kachari kingdom, with its capital at Dimapur. Early in the fourteenth century, the Ahoms became involved in war with the Chutiyas, but their final victory did not come till 1523 A. D., when the Chutiya king was defeated and his country annexed by Suhunmung, the "Dihingia Raja," who reigned from 1497—1539 A. D. This prince was successful in the west as well as in the north, and in 1536, he sacked Dimapur, killed the Kachari king, and compelled his successor to remove his capital to Maibang, on the northern slopes of the North Cachar Hills.

**Koch and
Muhamma-
dan inva-
sions.**

The Ahoms were now supreme in Upper Assam, and it is evident that the eastern portion of Darrang was included in their territory, as in 1523 a large number of Chutiya families were deported to a place a little to the east of the Bhareli river, which bears the name Sootea or Chutia to the present day. They were still, however, exposed to danger from the Koch and Muhammadan powers in the west. In 1532, they defeated with great slaughter a Muhammadan invader named Turbuk on the banks of the Bhareli river ; but a few years later they were conquered by the Koch king, Nar Narayan, who occupied their capital Gargaon, the modern Nazira, and exacted tribute from the Ahom prince.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were again involved in war with the Muhammadans, as their king Pratap Singh declined to surrender Bali Narayan, the Koch prince, who had fled to him for protection, and who sagaciously pointed out that in their own interests it was most desirable that they should maintain a buffer state between themselves and the Muhammadans. Most of the fighting took place in Lower Assam, but in 1615 A. D., a Musalman army under Satrajit advanced as far as the Bhareli to avenge a Muhammadan trader, who had been put to death by the Ahom king. The Muhammadans, though at first successful, were subsequently defeated both on land and water with great slaughter. The Ahoms are said to have crossed the Bhareli by a bridge and to have turned the flank of their opponents. The bulk of the invaders were killed, and the few prisoners who were taken were subsequently put to death

by the Ahom generals, much to the indignation of their ruler, who degraded his officers for this cold blooded murder.

The war then dragged on in Lower Assam, but in 1637 A. D., on the death of Bali Narayan, the Barnadi, which at present forms the western boundary of Darrang, was fixed as the frontier between the Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms took advantage of the confusion that ensued after the death of Shah Jehan to extend their arms to the Sankosh ; but three years later they were driven back by Mir Jumla, the Nawab of Dacca, who occupied Gargaon, and there concluded a treaty with the Ahom Raja, Sutumla, otherwise known as Jaiyadwaj Singh. In the course of their march up the valley the Muhammadans took the strong fort at Simlaghor*, which seems to have been situated near Silghat, whereupon the Assamese evacuated the fort of Chamdara on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra. A hill a little to the east of Tezpur is known as Chamdara at the present day, and there are the remains of a fine embankment running northwards from it to the Bhareli. The stars in their courses fought, however, on the Ahom side. The rains set in with a severity exceptional even in that rainy land ; the country was converted into a swamp, and disease made havoc of the Muhammadans crowded together in their water-logged camp. A large number of men were lost in the retreat down the valley, and by 1667, the Ahoms had again established themselves at

*Blochman in J. A. S. B., Vol. XI.1, Part 1, p. 71, places Simlaghor north of the Brahmaputra, but in this he is evidently mistaken.

Gauhati. A few years later this town was retaken by the Muhammadans, but it was captured again by the Ahoms during the reign of Gadadhar Singh (1681—1695), and from that time onward Goalpara remained the frontier outpost of the Muhammadan dominions.

**Rudra
Singh,
1695—1714
A. D.**

The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of Rudra Singh, who founded a new capital at Rangpur, and waged successful war against the Rajas of Cachar and Jaintia. Two large forces marched, the one through the North Cachar Hills, the other through the Jaintia Hills to Jaintiapur, and the general in command succeeded in arresting the Jaintia Raja and deported him to the Assam Valley. The Ahoms were, however, unable to impose their yoke upon the free and savage highlanders, who rose as one man and butchered the garrisons who had been left in a chain of forts across the Jaintia Hills. Rudra Singh was the first of the Ahom kings to publicly become the disciple of a Hindu priest, and after his death the power of the Ahom kingdom began steadily to decline.

**Sib Singh,
1714—1744
A. D.**

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands.

Both he and his two successors were ardent Saktists and erected numerous temples and made liberal grants of land and *paiks* for the maintenance of their special form of Hinduism.

The reign of his successor Pramatta Singh was uneventful, and during the incumbency of the next prince, Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds and declined the proffered honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

Pramatta Singh, 1744-1751.
Rajeswar Singh, 1751-1769.

Lakshmi Singh's reign was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borborua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom chroniclers, and

Lakshmi Singh, 1769-1780.
The Moamaria insurrection.

it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named Nahor and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain. The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagini Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

**Success and
subsequent
defeat of
Moamarias.**

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice ; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamarias, had forcibly taken her to wife, and, as he was bending down at the Bihu to offer his

largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader, the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age nor sex.* The house of the Moamaria mahunt was surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamaris were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorizing any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamaris with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees forsaking their wives and children."

**Gaurinath
Singh,
1780-
1795.
Moamaris
again vic-
torious.**

* The Moamaris say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is, no doubt, an oriental exaggeration.

The highest Hindu castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his terror left even his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur, but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler. "The Matakhs harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Daffa Hills and others in the fort of the Buragohain, who was fighting with the Matakhs for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792, a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was retaken, Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai, was subdued, and in March 1794, Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his enemies in check by the help of sepoy trained on the English system.

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died, and was succeeded by his son Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daflas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush*, a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandughat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoys in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Buragohain or prime minister, and fled to Calcutta and thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and re-instated the Bor Phukan; but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned

*This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkandazes to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonry, the size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

**Kamal-
eswar
Singh, 1795
-1809 A.D.**

**Final col-
lapse of the
Ahom king-
dom.**

with a large force, and replaced him on the throne. They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820, Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country. The villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Women who fell into their hands were violated, with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra, which occupied Rangpur in January 1825, and compelled the Burmese to retire to their own territories, while in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

**Ahom
administra-
tion : the
paik
system.**

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms, but their history is more intimately connected with the Sibsagar district. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up

into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *poua paik*. Over every twenty *gots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *baras* a *sai-kia*, and over every ten *sai-kias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the state, and, while so engaged, was supported by the other members. The Raja and his ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments, which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened Government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs, constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into disrepair. The duty of providing the various articles

required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indication of the reluctance with which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

War.

But though the common people seem to have been compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gadi*. Their guides, however, failed them, they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design and a feebleness and lack of method in execution.

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, *i.e.*, labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the Assamese would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moamarias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A.D., the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, blood-thirsty, and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'élite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and

Muhamma-
dans des-
cribe
Ahoms as
brave sol-
diers. 21

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in J. A. S. B., XLI, Pt. 1, pages 49-100.

the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

**Uncertainty
and arbit-
rary
character
of Govern-
ment.**

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty of tenure under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions, and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the administration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that "blood may not be shed."

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh (1611—1649 A. D.) A Kataki, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Kataki reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Kataki responsible for watching the movements of the enemy, whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Kataki was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern ; a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later, the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to revisit his former home would suffer the penalty of death

Instances
of this.

with all his family "even to the child in the womb." Five hundred men attempted to return, as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

**Savage punishments :
an official
blinded
for not dis-
mounting
before his
official
superior.**

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769—1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the time. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior the Borborua. A complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles, and his brother, were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil,

or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century, it was no uncommon thing to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more than one case is quoted, in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment, too, was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

The Ahoms, even after they became a powerful nation, seem to have adhered to a simple style of life, in which there was little of extravagance or luxury. They have left few masonry memorials of their rule; the Raja's palace is almost invariably referred to as a "planked house," and, according to Buchanan Hamilton, the king alone was allowed to erect an edifice of brick. Shoes might not be worn except by the special license of the king, bedsteads and curtains were only to be found in the houses of the rich, and all but the most important visitors to a noble's house sat on the bare ground. The account given of the Raja's palace at Gargaon by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion is pitched in a more exalted key. Twelve thousand workmen had been engaged on its construction for a year, and the audience hall was 120 cubits long by 30 wide. "The ornaments and curiosities with which the whole woodwork of the house was filled defy all description: nowhere in the

**Social life
amongst
Ahoms.**

whole inhabited world would you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation, and pictures." The absence of all references to these wonders in the Ahom histories suggests, however, that the Muhammadans were anxious to magnify the power and majesty of the prince they had subdued.

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang, Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar. They were fond of fishing and shooting and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction

than the one at Auniati ; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook or to the greater beauty of the *sattra* precincts.

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were Saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611—1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans, ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who, in 1692, plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shown even to the sacred head of the Auniati *sattra*, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhat. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakhinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off, while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and

**Attitude of
Ahoms to-
wards Hin-
duism.
Savage per-
secution
of Vaishna-
vism.**

fowls, cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of this unholy food.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniatigosain; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

During the Moamaria insurrection the religious orders again fell upon evil times. The rebel king confined the persons of the four principal gosains and extorted Rs. 8,000 each from Auniati and Dakhinpat, and Rs. 4,000 each from Garamur and Kamalabari. Religion was degraded by the promulgation of an order that any person could be initiated on payment of a betel-nut, and the common people availed themselves in crowds of this indulgence. Subsequently, in the reign of Gaurinath Singh, the Moamarias attacked the Garamur *sattr*a, burned it to the ground, slew a large number of the disciples and nearly killed the gosain himself. His successor Kamaleswar Singh (1795—1809) found himself unable to pay the sepoys whose services were indispensable for the maintenance of some sort of order in the kingdom. Following the example of other monarchs, he called upon the church to supply the funds for the support of the temporal power. Contributions were levied on all the mahunts and the demands of the soldiers were satisfied.

**Laziness of
Ahom Hinduism.**

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms found the restrictions of their new religion irksome; and their

gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral ; while not only buffaloes but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this clearly shows that even towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs ; a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moamaria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman, while at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress ; a breach of the *convenances* for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general

The position of women.

population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their womenfolk in honour, and, even at the present day, the purdah and all that it implies is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the seventeenth century, two of the queens almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714--1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed, and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his stepmother the control of the Khangia mel, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Buragohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muham-madans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put

on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shown her and she fell, pierced with spears ; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

In estimating the effects of British rule it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense which is usually assigned to that word. The native system of government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors, but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any lust for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese, the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

**Condition
of Province
at time of
cession to
the British.**

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer

kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh shortly before the collapse of the Ahom government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouth of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1808 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

**Native
testimony
on this
point.**

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman, Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills.

"Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the Province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure, been fulfilled; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of

nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

The history of the district under British rule has been very uneventful, and, before referring to such incidents as have occurred, it will be desirable to touch briefly on our dealings with the various tribes inhabiting the hills that bound it on the north. The history of these tribes down to the year 1884 will be found in fuller detail in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

The north-
ern frontier
—Bhutan.

On the north-west frontier of the district lie two duars, Khaling and Buriguma, to which claims were laid by the Bhutias at the time when we took over the administration of the Province. These claims dated from the time of the Ahom Rajas. Originally the boundary of this debatable land lay at some distance to the north of the Gohain Kamala Ali, but the Bhutias took advantage of the weakness of the Ahom government, and occupied territory even to the south of that great road. In 1810, they were driven back, and compelled to pay Rs.20,000 worth of goods as compensation. But during the troublous times that followed they advanced again, and, in 1835, were in occupation of villages south of the Gohain Kamala Ali*.

A curious system of dual control was inherited from the days of native rule, under which the Assam Government occupied the two duars from July to November,

* Lieutenant Mathie's report, para 44.

and received from the Bhutias as rent for this tract and for the five duars in North Kamrup a certain quantity of yaks' tails, ponies, musk, gold, etc., of an estimated value of Rs. 4,785 per annum. This arrangement, it need hardly be said, proved most unsatisfactory. The Bhutias oppressed our villagers, and the duars acted as an Alsatia for all the criminals of the district, who could easily retire into the hills during the four months of our occupation. In 1841, the seven duars were definitely annexed, and Rs.10,000 per annum was offered to the Bhutias as compensation for the loss of such rights as they possessed. The conduct of the hillmen still continued to give ground for just complaint, and an expedition had at last to be despatched into their territory. In 1865, on the conclusion of this war, the whole of the Assam and Bengal duars were annexed, but compensation, which now amounts to Rs. 50,000 per annum, is paid to the hillmen, so long as they remain of good behaviour.

Towang.

East of Bhutan, is the province of Towang which owes direct allegiance to the Government of Lhasa. The Kariapara duar, which lies at the foot of this section of the Himalayas, was annexed shortly after our occupation of Assam, and in 1844 the local officials, who are known as Gelengs, agreed to accept Rs. 5,000 per annum as a perpetual quit rent. In 1852, one of these Gelengs asserted his independence, and when troops were sent from Lhasa to arrest him, fled to British territory. The Tibetans demanded his surrender, which was refused, and four hundred men

with two guns were sent up to the frontier to oppose the threatened raid. This in itself was enough to damp the ardour of the hillmen, and it was agreed that the Geleng should be allowed to live in British territory south of the Brahmaputra. In 1861, he returned to the hills, but again embroiled himself with the authorities, and for a second time fled to the plains for refuge. He was allowed to remain in the neighbourhood of the frontier, and, in 1864, was murdered by a party of his enemies. No very decided action was taken on this violation of British territory, as the local officials were of opinion that the stoppage of the yearly payments might only lead to further raids. Since that date no trouble has been experienced on this section of the frontier.

The Charduar Bhutias, who lie further to the east, are a peaceful tribe who have given comparatively little trouble. In 1826, the compensation to be paid to them was fixed at Rs. 2,526, but thirteen years later it was reduced to Rs. 1,740 to punish them for the murder of a British subject. Their country lies between the Rota and the Gabharu rivers. Their neighbours on the east are the Thebengia Bhutias, a small and peaceful clan who receive Rs. 146 per annum.

Between the Bhareli river and the Bhutias live the Akas, a small but warlike tribe, who more than once have caused embarrassment to the Government. They are divided into two sections, the Hazarikhoas, or the people supported by a thousand groups of raiyats, and the Kapaschors or "thieves who lurk in the cotton

fields"; and, in the time of the Assam Rajas, they regularly harried the inhabitants of the plains. For many years the chief of the Kapaschor tribe, Tagi Raja, violated our boundaries, and, in 1829, he was captured and lodged in the Gauhati jail. In 1832, he was released, but immediately resumed his attacks, and, in 1835, massacred all the inhabitants of the police outpost and British village of Balipara. Six years later he surrendered, and an agreement was made by which both sections of the tribe received a yearly allowance, subsequently increased to Rs.668, in consideration of good conduct. In 1883, Medhi, the Kapaschor chief, detained a mauzadar who had visited his village, while his brother carried off from Balipara a clerk and ranger in the employ of the Forest Department. A punitive expedition was despatched which occupied their territory and recovered the captives, with the exception of the mauzadar who had already died. Since that date they have given little trouble, but in 1900, a party of armed Akas forcibly entered the shop of a trader at Balipara, to exact the amount which they alleged was due to them for rubber taken from their hills. A fine was imposed on the tribe, but, in order to minimize the chances of friction, it was decided to discontinue the practice under which coolies had been sent into the hills to tap rubber, and to leave the hillmen to bring down this product themselves.

The Daflas' relation with Ahoms.

The hills which stretch from the Bhareli river to the Sumdiri north of Lakhimpur are inhabited by the Daflas, a people, like their neighbours on the east and west, of Thibeto-Burman origin. In the days of Rudra Singh, they

seem to have owned allegiance to the Ahom Government, and both they and the Miris are said to have served in the expedition sent against the Kachari and Jaintia kings. Rudra Singh's son and successor, Sib Singh, constructed the Daflagarh to check their raids, and a later prince, Rajeswar Singh (1751—1769), seems to have experienced the same difficulties in dealing with them and to have adopted much the same remedies as successive Lieutenant-Governors and Chief Commissioners. The Daflas carried off one Bihoal Dom and his family, whereupon the king closed the duars and established a blockade. A deputation of hillmen then waited upon him, in the hope of coming to some agreement, but he foolishly broke faith and detained them as hostages at Kaliabar. The Daflas promptly retaliated by raiding again and carrying off more captives. An exchange of prisoners was ultimately arranged, and the experiment was then tried of giving each Dafla house a *pura* of rice and four *pans* of cowries in order to encourage them to be of good behaviour. In the period of anarchy that followed the accession of Lakshmi Singh, the hillmen threw off all semblance of control, and even ventured to cross the Brahmaputra in search of booty. It was only natural that they should resist the efforts of the British officers to reduce them again to order, and it was not till 1852 that their claims to collect their dues from the submontane villages were commuted for a money payment of Rs. 2,543.*

* Lieutenant Mathie (para. 77) states that the right to levy blackmail was conceded to the Daflas on the understanding that they in return would serve in the army of the Ahom Raja when called upon to do so. This being so their title to *pura* lapsed on our annexation of Assam, as we had no desire for such auxiliaries.

**Early raids
and ex-
pedition of
1874-75.**

Like the other Himalayan tribes, their tempers are cast in a milder mould than those of the savages who occupy the Assam Range, and in their raids upon the plains they have generally contented themselves with taking prisoners, and have stopped short at murder. In 1835, they carried off a few persons from Balipara, who shortly afterwards were rescued by a small expeditionary force. Similar disturbances occurred in 1870 and 1872. In the latter year the village of Amtolla, near Gohpur, which was inhabited by Daflas who had settled in the plains, was raided by the hillmen, and forty-four persons were carried off, and two, who resisted, murdered. The hillmen had been troubled by an epidemic, which they alleged had been introduced from the plains, and called upon the plains Daflas to compensate them for the loss of life incurred. On their declining to accede to this proposal, the hillmen made good their demands by force. A blockade was at first instituted, but on this proving ineffectual, an expedition was despatched into the hills in 1874-75, and the captives were recovered.

**Misconduct
since 1896.**

For more than 20 years after this demonstration of our power the tribe continued to be of good behaviour ; but in 1896 they detained a party of coolies, who had absconded from the Dikrai tea estate and wandered into the hills. The payment of *posa* was stopped, but the last of the coolies was not recovered till 1900. In 1899, they carried off four persons and three guns from an elephant camp near the frontier, not far from the Rangaghor garden in order to invite attention to their claims against a firm of Kaiyas for the price of rubber

tapped in their territory. The prisoners and most of the property were recovered, the Kaiyas were required to pay what was due, and the Daflas were fined for their violation of our territory, while a liberal deduction was made from the sum paid by the Kaiyas on account of the value of such property as was missing. Four years later the hillmen again carried off four men and seven guns from an elephant stockade in the same locality, as they were discontented with the distribution of a sum of money paid for the right of catching elephants in their territory. The captives were returned and the guns restored, but the other property was not forthcoming. The value of these articles was, accordingly, deducted from the *Dafla posa* and paid over to the owner.

Darrang was separated from Lower Assam and erected into a separate district in 1833, and its history since that date has been uneventful. The headquarters were first established at Mangaldai, but in 1835, were removed to Tezpur, which is situated in the centre of the district and is nearer to the Dafla tribes, who at that time were a source of some anxiety to the Government. For many years the station was considered most unhealthy, and in the eleven years between 1842 and 1853 no less than five European officers died of diseases contracted while they were resident at Tezpur. This unhealthiness is unfortunately not confined to the headquarters town, but seems to be a characteristic of the district as a whole. The development of Darrang has been hampered by the stagnation of the population. In 1853, Mr. Mills stated that the people had been supposed to be decreasing in

**History of
the district
under British
Administration.**

numbers during the four preceding years ; and in the thirty years between 1842 and 1872 the total censused increase was only 27 per cent, a large part of which was, doubtless, due to the superior accuracy of the later enumeration. In the twenty years ending with 1901 the indigenous population decreased considerably in numbers, and, had it not been for the existence of a flourishing tea industry, the district would still have been in a very undeveloped state. The administration of Darrang does not seem to have been hampered by the want of officers. In 1841, a junior assistant, a sub-assistant, a sadr amin and two munsifs were stationed in the district,* and a similar number of officers were employed on judicial work in 1853. In those days there was little of hurry or bustle in Assam, and the administration of justice, if sure, was distinctly slow. Matters seem to have been particularly bad in the court of the joint magistrate, but that officer, when called on for an explanation, protested with some show of indignation that the detention of witnesses seldom exceeded eight days. As a matter of fact, it appears from the returns that, in 1852, no less than 36 unfortunate persons were detained from 16 to 22 days before they could get their evidence recorded !

The Patharughat riots in 1894.

Only once during the past fifty years has the internal peace of the district been seriously disturbed. The population of the Patharughat tahsil is largely composed of Muhammadans, who have more than once shown themselves impatient of control. When the revenue was raised in 1868, the villagers assembled in an unruly mob,

* Robinson's Assam, p. 290.

and besieged the Deputy Commissioner, the Subdivisional Officer and the District Superintendent of Police in the rest-house ; but no extreme measures were resorted to on either side. In January 1894, after the reassessment of the Assam Valley, the villagers in this portion of the district declined to pay their revenue, and collected in tumultuous crowds with the evident intention of overawing the authorities. The Deputy Commissioner accordingly proceeded to Patharughat with twelve military policemen and nineteen members of the armed civil police, in order to lend the weight of his authority to the local revenue officials, who were quite unable to collect the land tax. The people assembled in a dense crowd in the compound of the inspection bungalow, and as they obstinately declined to move they had to be ejected by the police. About half an hour afterwards the mob returned armed with sticks and clods, and the police again advanced and drove them down a road on to an open plain. Here the mob rallied and began to pelt the police with clods and sticks, and gradually to hem them in. The police were compelled to open fire, but even then the rioters did not give way, and the police retired slowly firing all the time, with the crowd continually pressing in upon them. A final volley was then discharged and the police charged the rioters who at last began to yield, though they reformed a little distance off, and the Deputy Commissioner was compelled to retire to the inspection bungalow. Altogether fifteen men were killed and thirty-seven wounded in this unfortunate affair.

**Archæo-
logical
remains.
The temples
on the
Bamuni
hill.**

The most interesting archæological remains in Dar-rang are the ruins of the fine stone temples on the Bamuni hill a little to the east of Tezpur, and the carved pillars, entablatures, and friezes which are still to be seen lying near the cutchery, and are probably the remains of the glories of Durjaya. The Bamuni temples are thus described by Captain Westmacott :—

“The first temple I examined appeared to have faced the north, and to have been provided with a portico supported on three columns of sixteen sides; each shaft, not including the plinth—a pedestal which stands four feet above the ground—measured eight feet high, and five and a half in girth, and was wrought from a single block of fine granite. The shafts have sculptured capitals, while the surbases take the form of an octagon, and the plinths are circular at top, and spread into four feet, making a sort of cross that measured four and three-quarter feet each way. These gigantic stones, with the fragments of a fourth, each hewn from a single block fourteen feet long, and cut into five irregular sides, of which the total showed a circumference of eight feet, seemed to have formed the entablature of the entrance porch, which I judged to have been fifty-six feet long. The frieze has three tiers of carving in basso relievo, representing scrolls of flowers. The apertures, in which iron rivets were introduced, can still be distinctly traced, and it is evident that no cement was employed to unite the materials. The other ruins were too much shattered and dispersed to enable me to conjecture the form of the temple. From a great portion of the surrounding works being in an unfinished state, it affords the presumption that the architect must have met with some unlooked-for interruption; and that this, and the other buildings, were overthrown at the same period by some hostile power opposed to the propagation of Hinduism, assisted perhaps, subsequently, by a convulsion of nature. Had time been the sole agent in overthrowing these structures, it is but fair to suppose, from the great solidity of the materials, that the ruin would have been less complete, and that the fragments would have lain in a narrower compass. The destruction of the temples at this place is ascribed by some to Kala Pahar, the general of Sulaiman, King of Bengal, at whose door the Assamese lay all the sacrilege and mischief that has been consummated in the Province.

From their massive proportions, and the carving and ornaments being so much worn by time and exposure, the fanes are evidently the work of a remote era ; I sought in vain for an inscription, and neither the priests of the district, nor the ancient families whom I consulted, could assist my researches, or point, with any approximation to accuracy, to the date of their origin.

Unconnected with the first temple, and retired some yards deeper in the wood, or rather grove of trees which was in likelihood planted by the priests who ministered at the temples, I found the ruins of six or seven other enormous structures of granite, broken into thousands of fragments, and dispersed over the ground in the same extraordinary manner as those already described. Altars of gigantic proportions were among the most remarkable objects ; one of these, measuring upwards of six feet each way and eighteen inches thick, was elevated from seven to eight feet above the level of the plain, and approached on each side by layers of stone disposed in the form of steps. It was hewn from a single block of granite ; underneath was a sort of cavern ; the top had holes for iron links, and a receptacle to receive flowers and water to bedew the Nandi, or sacred bull of Siva, who was placed, my informants imagined, on the brink of the reservoir. Six or eight other altars, one of them making a square of forty-six feet and eighteen inches thick, are to be seen in other parts of the ruins ; and several square blocks, each measuring from twenty to thirty feet, concave in the centre, and sculptured in imitation of circlets of flowers, must have formed the *bedi* or altar-piece of Siva, as there is a seat for the *linga*, or symbol of the deity, in the middle of each.

The ruins are partly encompassed by walls, which extend in so many directions that it is scarcely possible to guess at the purpose of the architect. The walls have their foundations laid very deep in the earth. They are in an unfinished state, and were evidently constructed at a period long subsequent to the temples ; they are built of massive blocks of cut stone, sometimes disposed in a double row, and exhibit a good deal of carving. The stones are of various shapes, and rise three or four feet from the ground, and were all intended to be united by bands of iron. The entrance of the principal enclosures appears to have been from the south, where lie some pedestals and three or four wedge-shaped stones, about five feet long and three broad, of a flattened pentagonal shape, intended, I presume, to have formed the *voussoirs* of an arch ; the middle of the key-stone is decorated with a handsome diadem or plumed tiara.

A little to the north of the wood, buried in a forest of reeds, I discovered a very interesting fragment: this was a solid mass of granite, of a much finer grain than the kind used in the temples measuring ten and a half feet in length, two and three quarters in breadth, and two in depth. On this were sculptured, in very high relief, eighteen figures of gods, partially mutilated, but generally in a good state of preservation.

Near the images are nine square pedestals of large dimensions, with three carved feet, which must have been intended to give support to as many columns; of these several have almost disappeared in the earth, and it is probable that others are lost altogether. It shows, at all events, that the design of the temple must have been projected on a larger scale. The pedestals do not appear to have been moved from the spot where they were originally carved; and they are so little impaired by time and exposure to the elements that I feel assured they are of modern date compared with the buildings in the plantations and on the adjacent plain. They were, indeed, as fresh to look at as if but recently executed by the mason's chisel. Vast fragments of the epistylum and frieze, carved with beaded drapery, also lie half-buried in the soil.

In the south-west angle of the Pura plains, there is another curious remnant of sculpture, also wrought from a single mass of granite, upwards of ten feet long and two and a half thick at the middle. It appears to have formed the side of a gate, and has a band of carving three inches broad on each side, showing in relief, elephants, tigers, deer, rams, cattle, and swans, encircled by scrolls of flowers.

No quarries were discovered to indicate that the stones were disembowelled from the hills; but quantities of chips were seen in places; and once I came upon pillars and altars in an unfinished state, shaped from blocks of granite, on the surface of the earth. There seems no question that all the material employed on the fabrics was similarly procured from the masses of rock that cover the hills in great abundance. Once or twice only I fell in with well-burnt bricks; they were smooth and thin, of rather a large size, but not badly shaped. Great part of these extensive ruins are buried or have sunk into the earth, and they cover altogether about four or five acres of land.

I have been thus particular in noticing them, because there are not, so far as I know, any architectural remains in Assam that can

challenge a comparison with them for durability of material and magnitude of design ; and it is certain, from the prodigious number of ruinous and deserted temples, all of which appear to be dedicated to Siva, lying within the circuit of a few miles of Pura (I discovered twelve or fifteen in as many days on the hills and high lands at their feet), that this spot must have been the capital of a sovereign prince, or a principal seat of the Hindu religion enjoying a large share of prosperity at some remote period."

One of the largest temples in Darrang is the one sacred to Basudeb, which is situated near the Kharoi *bil* in the Kalabari mauza. It was built in 1758 A. D. and consists of a dome 26 feet in diameter at the base and 62 feet high, and a nave 28 feet long and 15 feet broad. The walls are about four feet thick and are made of thin flat bricks with a good glaze, but the whole structure has been allowed to fall into disrepair, and the idol has been removed to a shed close by. The temple is the property of the Dakhinpat gosain, and steps are now being taken to ensure that the necessary repairs are executed.

The Kalabari temple.

There is a similar temple on the southern slopes of the Singri hill in which there is a well, which is connected by a subterranean conduit with the Brahmaputra, so that the water in the well rises and falls with the water in the river. An image of Siva is supposed to be reposing at the bottom of the well, and the offerings of worshippers are accordingly thrown into the water. The date of the construction of the temple is not known. According to one account it was founded by Singri Rishi in the heroic age. Another legend has it that it was erected to the memory of one Vishnu Puri Swami, and that the Bhutias pay tribute to the temple at the present day as a punishment for having stolen a stone that had been placed upon his grave.

The Singri temple.

This of course is legend and nothing more, but it is an actual fact that this temple, like the one at Hajo in Kamrup, is visited by considerable numbers of Bhutias in the cold weather.

Temples at Bishnath. Bishnath was a great religious centre after the conversion of the Ahom kings to Hinduism, and at one time there were several temples there, which at the present day have fallen into ruins. The Bishnath temple was built by Gadadhar Singh in 1685 A. D., and a copper plate is still extant which records the grant of four Brahman and forty Sudra *paiks*, eight dancing girls, and twenty *puras* of land with various ornaments to the idol. In 1815, a further grant of twenty-four *puras* of land was made by Chandra Kanta Singh; but the temple was long ago swept away by the Brahmaputra, and even the lingam, which is carved on a big rock, is only visible in the dry season. About 1730 A.D., Sib Singh constructed at Bishnath the Sivanath moth, a temple about 40 feet high, which has now fallen into disrepair; but this is not so fine a specimen of Ahom architecture as the Bordol temple which was erected by Gaurinath Singh about 1790 A. D. There are two small temples standing on rocks in the river, and four other places sacred to Basudeb, Kamaleswar; Muktinath, and Surjya Madhub; but worship is here conducted in a miserable thatched hut, and from an archæological point of view they possess but little interest. Local tradition avers that Sati's breast fell near Bishnath when her body was hewn in pieces by Vishnu, and though this tradition is not supported by the *Yogini Tantra*, which is the great authority on the subject, it

possibly accounts for the unusual degree of reverence with which Bishnath was regarded by the Ahom kings.

There are two small temples in the Borbhegia mauza, Other temples. one the Nandikeswar, about three miles east of the Bhareli, and the other the Nagsankar, about six miles distant from that river. They are said to have been built by the kings of Pratappur, but very little is known about their origin. The Mahabhàirab temple is a small brick building of recent date, about one mile due north of the Tezpur catchery. It contains a large lingum which was apparently originally enshrined in a stone temple dating from the time of the Pala kings. The Haleswar temple is said to have been built under the orders of Rudra Singh, at the spot where a lingum was discovered by a man when ploughing (*hal*), and owes its name to that circumstance. A complete list of the temples in the district is appended to the following chapter.

Reference has been already made to the remains of the The Pratappgarh. earthworks at Pratappgarh. The embankment, which is still about 20 feet in width, runs for more than two miles north of the trunk road, and then meets the Majuligarh which is continued right up to the foot of the hills.

The fortress at Bhalukpang is situated on the top of Bhalukpang. a hill, 300 feet high, near the point where the Bhareli issues from the Aka Hills. Three sides of the hill are surrounded by a brick wall, and, on the fourth, the fortifications are carried across to an adjoining hillock which slopes gradually to the plain. Hewn stones and the remains of plinths are to be seen within the ramparts,

and a steep pathway paved with stone runs up the eastern face of the hill.

**The Burai
Walls.**

On either side of the Burai river, just beyond the inner line, there are two masonry walls, one of which is about 300 yards long and 10 feet high. These walls, with a sacred cave in the vicinity, were described by Colonel Dalton in the Calcutta Review and recently by Mr. W. N. Edwards*. From their position it appears that they were erected to protect their occupants from invasion from the south.

Tanks.

The only other memorials of a bygone age are the tanks which are to be found in every portion of the district, many of them in places which are now completely destitute of inhabitants. They thus suggest, what on *a priori* grounds seems only probable, that some centuries ago the population of Darrang was greater than it is at the present day.

* *Vide J. A. S. B., Vol. LXXIII, Pt. I, No. 3, 1904.*

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

AHOM KINGS.	
A. D.	
1228	Sukapha.
1268	Sutenpha.
1281	gubinpha.
1293	Sukangpha.
1332	Sukampha.
1364	Sutupha—treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Safrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.
1376—1380 Interregnum.	
1380	Sukemthi—a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.
1389—1398 Interregnum.	
1398	Sudangpha.
1407	Siyangpha.
1422	Suphukph
1439	Susingpha—defeats Nagas.
1488	Suhangpha—defeated by Kacharis in 1490 and murdered by a convict.
1493	Supimpha—a cruel prince, assassinated by his ministers.
1497	Suhunmung <i>alias</i> Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja—conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom, 1523. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532 who was routed near Bhareli river. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimsapur his capital in 1536. Assassinated 1539.
1539	Sukhenmung—built Gargaon (Nazira)
1532	Sukampha.
1611	Suchengpha or Pratap Singh—assists Balli Narayan against Mussalmans—besieges Hajo but is driven back. Barnadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.

MUHAMMADAN INVASION.	
A. D.	
1204	Baktiar Khilji invades Assam.
1220	Ghiyasud din Bahadur Shah—advances to Sadilya but is defeated.
1266	Iktiyarud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan—invades the Brahmaputra Valley, but is ultimately defeated.
1337	Muhammed Shah—sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish.

KOCH KINGS.	
1509—1534	Viewa Singh—founds Koch kingdom, advances against Ahoms but was apparently defeated.
1534—1584	Nar Narayan—conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon, circa 1563 A. D. Subdues Rajas of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur, Tippera and Sylhet. Kala Fabar invades Assam in 1553 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.
1581—1593	Raghu Rai—obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankosh.
1593-1614	Parikshit—builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakshmi Narayan who calls in Muhammadans to his aid.
1614—1637	Balli Narayan—invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—(continued).**AHOM KINGS.**

1649	Surumpba—deposed.
1652	Suchingpha—deposed.
1654	Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh— Ahoms occupy Goalpara 1653. Driven back by Mir Jumla who enters Gargaon 1661.
1663	Chakradwaj—Ahoms r e o c c u p y Gauhati in 1667.
1670	Adayaditya Singh—assassinated.
1672	Suklumpha—poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati.
1674	Suhung—assassinated.
1674	Teenkungiya—assassinated.
1674	Suhungpha—blinded and murdered.
1677	Sudinpha—assassinated.
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja)—assassinated.
1681	Gadadhar Singh—Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.
1695	Rudra Singh—founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.
1714	Sib Singh—a weak prince who re- signed in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibesar.
1744	Framatta Singh.
1751	Rajeswar Singh—decline of Ahom power.
1769	Lakshmi Singh—outbreak of Mo- maria rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.
1780	Gaurinath Singh—driven to Gau- hati by Moemarias. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is, however, recalled in 1794.
	Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja— asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.
1798	Kamaleswar Singh—deposes Krish- na Narayan.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—(concluded).**AHOM KINGS.**

1809	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816.
1816	Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.
1818	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave—Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between British and Burmese Governments.
1825	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

CHAPTER III. POPULATION.

Density of population—Town and villages—Growth of population—Variations by subdivisions—Migration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Castes—Religion—Hindu sects—Gosains and sattras—Muhammadanism—Animism—Minor religions—Christianity—Occupations—Marriage customs—Amusements and festivals.

**Density of
population.**

The district covers an area of 3,418 square miles and is comparatively sparsely peopled, except in the central portion of Mangaldai. Roughly speaking, this tract is included in the tahsils of Kalaigaon and Patharughat, which, in 1901, covered an area of 422 square miles and supported a population of 209 to the square mile, and in the Mangaldai tahsil, which had a density of 162 to the square mile. Population is also fairly dense in the belt of land which runs northward from Tezpur town towards the hills and is included in the Tezpur tahsil and the Bali-para mauza. East and west of Tezpur the submontane tracts are very sparsely peopled ; and the Gohpur mauza, which lies in the east of the district and covered an area of 508 square miles, had only 49 persons to the square mile in 1901. There are also wide stretches of waste land between the Gabharu river and Odalguri. The Bargaon, Orang, Dalgaon, Rangapani, and Sonaigaon mauzas, which are included in this tract, had a population, in 1901, of only 34 persons to the square mile, over

a total area of 900 square miles. Much of this waste land is undoubtedly well adapted for cultivation, and it is allowed to remain under jungle, not because it is intrinsically undesirable, but because there is no one in the district to till it. The area and population of each tahsil and mauza in 1901 will be found in Table III.

Darrang contains one town, Tezpur, which in 1901, had a population of 5,047 souls, and 1,275 villages. Town and villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. Except on the grassy plains inhabited by the Kacharis, it is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance; but, taking them for what they are worth, it appears that villages run small, as, in 1901, nearly two-thirds of the population of the district were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

**Growth of
population.**

The earliest estimate of the population was made in 1835, and was evidently much below the mark. The Bhutan Duars were excluded from the calculation, and in the remainder of the district there were said to be 89,519 persons. In 1841-42, a more accurate enumeration showed 185,569 people living within the district as at present constituted, but the first regular census was not taken till 1872.

		Population.	Percentage of increase in decade.
1872	...	235,720	
1881	...	273,012	+ 16·8
1891	...	307,440	+ 12·6
1901	...	337,313	+ 9·7

The abstract in the margin shows the population recorded at the last four enumerations and the percentage of increase in each decade.

At first sight it would appear that the people were growing in numbers in a satisfactory manner, but further investigation shows that this is not the case. The whole of the increase is due to immigration, and not to, what is generally expected, an excess of births over deaths. There was no increase in the number of persons born and censused in the district between 1881 and 1891, and, as the latter enumeration was the more accurate of the two, it is only reasonable to suppose that they actually declined in numbers. The results disclosed by the last census were even more unsatisfactory. The decrease in the indigenous population was no less than 8 per cent, and the total population enumerated outside the tea gardens was more than 2,000 less than it had been ten years before.

These unsatisfactory results are partly due to the spread of *kala-azar*, an acute and very contagious form of fever, which is described at greater length in the section dealing with the medical aspects of the district. But apart from special causes of this nature, it seems possible that there may be something connected with the tract of country lying between the Brahmaputra and the Himalayas which is unfavourable to the rapid growth of population. The census of 1872 was non-synchronous, and accurate statistics are only available for the purposes of comparison for the last twenty years. During this period there has been no material growth in Goalpara, Kamrup, or Darrang, but it is possible that this is due to the existence of the special cause to which reference has been already made, *i. e.*, *kala-azar*. It is, however, a significant fact that the population of the Kuch Bihar State, which is not known to have suffered from this fever, steadily decreased between 1881 and 1901. Again, in the neighbouring district of Rangpur, the population in 1901 was only a few hundreds more than that returned in 1872; and, as there was a great improvement in the accuracy of the enumeration, it is evident that during these twenty-nine years the total population declined in numbers.

Are the
Himalayan
plains
inimical to
human life?

There is nothing in the Assam terai to suggest to the casual visitor that it is specially unhealthy. The land lies high, is fairly free from jungle, and rolls in grassy plains, covered with short springy turf, to the foot of the Himalayas. It is, however, an undoubted fact that the detachment of sepoy who used to garrison the fort at

Odalguri, returned each year to their regiment broken in health and saturated with malaria. Yet they were only stationed at this outpost in the cold weather, and, at that season of the year, Odalguri fort is, to all outward seeming, far from an unhealthy place of residence. The cause of the unhealthiness of the locality is most obscure. Possibly it may be, in some way, connected with the high subsoil level of the water, due to the disappearance of some of the rivers into the soil in the northern portion of the plain, a phenomenon which is common to all the Bhutan Duars. This stagnation of the population is, moreover, not a thing of yesterday. In 1853, Mr. Moffatt Mills was informed by the local officers that the population had been decreasing during the four preceding years, and severe charges were brought by the civil surgeon against the salubrity of Tezpur, the headquarters station.* He pointed out that during the preceding eleven years no less than five European officers had died of diseases contracted while they were in charge of that town; but, in common fairness, it must be admitted that this exceptional mortality was in all probability largely due to special disadvantages of site, which have since been partially remedied.

Variation
by sub-
divisions.

	Population.		Percentage variation.	
	1901.	1891-1901.	1881-1891.	
Tezpur ...	166,733	+39.5	+37.5	
Mangaldai ...	170,680	-9.2	+0.08	

The abstract in the margin shows the distribution of the population by subdivisions and the percentage of variation that took place in the last two decades.

* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta, 1854. 'Darrang.'

The contrast between the eastern and western portions of the district is most marked, as, while the population of Tezpur was advancing by leaps and bounds, that of Mangaldai was at first stationary and then positively receding. There is, however, a most complete difference between the conditions prevailing in the two subdivisions. In 1881, Tezpur was very sparsely peopled, there being only 42 persons to the square mile, whereas in Mangaldai there were 146, and most of the good rice land south of the Kachari mauzas was already taken up. In the latter subdivision the general health has been extremely bad, the soil has not proved very suitable for the cultivation of tea, and the overflow from the plantations has not been enough to make good the deficiencies occurring in the ranks of the village population. In Tezpur there are numerous flourishing tea gardens, to which large quantities of coolies are imported every year. Many of these persons save money and settle down as independent cultivators. The extent to which this process of colonization has been carried on can be judged from the fact that, in 1901, it was found that no less than 13 per cent. of the villagers of Tezpur had been born in the Provinces and States which supply Assam with its garden coolies. *Kala-azar* has appeared near Bishnath and Tezpur town, but the mortality from this disease in the *sadr* subdivision has been insignificant in comparison with the havoc wrought in Mangaldai, and the general condition of this portion of the district may be considered to be distinctly satisfactory. In Tezpur, there was, in 1901, in each tahsil and mauza, a

large increase of population, which was most pronounced in Gohpur and Bargaon, two extensive tracts at the eastern and western ends of the subdivision, where there is a great quantity of excellent land available for settlement. On the other hand, Sekhar and Jhaprabari, two mauzas in the north-west corner of Mangaldai, were the only portions of that subdivision where there was any appreciable increase of population, and this was almost entirely due to the importation of garden coolies. Everywhere else there was a decrease, which was most pronounced in the Patharughat and Mangaldai tahsils in the south-west corner, and in the Harisinga, Ambagaon, Sonaigaon, and Rangapani mauzas, which lie between Bengbari and Orang at the foot of the Bhutan Hills. Further details with regard to the density and variation in the population of each tahsil and mauza in the district will be found in Table III.

Migration. Reference has been already made to the extent to which Darrang has relied on immigration to keep up its population, and the statistics of birthplace show that, in 1901, more than one-fourth of the persons censused in the district were foreigners who had been born outside the boundaries of the Province. In Tezpur, these foreigners formed nearly 42 per cent of the total population, but in Mangaldai, where the tea industry is of less importance, they were only 9 per cent of the whole. The total number of persons censused in the district in 1901 who had been born outside Assam was 84,749, more than two-thirds of whom came from the Province

of Bengal. The immense mass of these immigrants were garden coolies, but Bengalis also find employment in Darrang as clerks and shop-keepers, while practically all the wholesale trade is in the hands of Marwari merchants from Rajputana. The Bhutias who were censused in the plains were only temporary visitors who descend from the hills in the cold weather, but the Nepalese are settling in Darrang in considerable numbers. Many of them are graziers, sawyers, and rubber tappers, but they are also taking to cultivation, especially in the Gohpur and Behali mauzas. Darrang gains largely by inter-district migration, as comparatively few people leave the district, and there is a considerable influx from Kamrup and Nowgong. About 4,000 of the immigrants from Kamrup were probably Kachari coolies working on the tea gardens, but the great bulk of the remainder must have been ordinary cultivators attracted by the broad stretches of culturable waste land still available for settlement.

At each of the last four enumerations there has been a great disparity between the sexes, and, in 1901, there were only 916 females to every 1,000 males. This is, however, principally due to the large foreign element in the population, in which women are always in a minority, and amongst those born and enumerated in Darrang the proportion rises to 984. Infant marriage is quite the exception, as will be seen from the statement in the margin, which shows the percentage of Hindu girls under 10, and between 10 and 15, who have performed the marriage

**Sex and
marriage.**

Percentage of Hindu girls married and widowed.			ceremony ; and the percentage of girls between 15 and 20, who, even according to western ideas, would be considered <i>aptæ viro</i> , who were still unwed. For the purposes of comparison similar figures have been inserted for Goalpara, as that district has been infected with the singular idea, that is unfortunately so general in Bengal, that social status can in some way be obtained by submitting an immature child to the responsibilities of matrimony. In an equal number of girls under ten there are seven who have been married in Goalpara, for everyone who has performed the ceremony in Darrang ; and in the latter district more than a third of the girls, even between 15 and 20, were still unwed.
Age.	Goalpara.	Darrang.	
0 10	4·8	0·7	
10 15	62·4	14·7	
	Percentage.	Unmarried.	
15 20	7·2	36·5	

The growth of the population depends to some extent upon the number of potential mothers. Assuming that this class is represented by married women between 15 and 40, it appears that the reproductive section form 164 per mille of the total population, which is 7 per mille more than the proportion for the Province as a whole.

Infirmities. Darrang as a whole is fairly free from three out of the four special infirmities recorded at each census. The number of persons returned as insane in 1901 was below the Provincial average, after allowing for the lunatics censused in the Tezpur Asylum who had been born outside the district. Deaf-mutism is, however, fairly common,

and the proportion afflicted not only exceeds the Provincial average but is more than 50 per cent higher than that prevailing in India as a whole. The percentage of lepers is considerably lower than that returned from most of the districts of the Province, but is much in excess of the average for the whole of India.

The abstract in the margin shows the number out of

	Darrang. Assam. India.			10,000 males afflicted in
Insane ...	7	5	3	Darrang, Assam, and the
Lepers ...	8	13	5	Indian Empire as a whole.
Deaf-mutes...	10	9	6	
Blind ...	6	10	12	

The figures for males only have been given, as the return for females, especially in the case of leprosy, is probably not so accurate.

Assamese and Bodo or Kachari are the forms of speech **Language.** natural to the indigenous inhabitants of the district, and the former was used by 51 per cent of the population in 1901, the latter by 16 per cent. The bulk of the Kachari speakers are found in Mangaldai, in the grassy plains at the foot of the Himalayas, but, though faithful to their tribal form of speech in their own homes, most of the villagers understand and speak Assamese as well. Bengali was returned by 19 per cent of the population, but it is doubtful whether in many cases the term indicates more than a foreign language, Bengali and foreigner being almost interchangeable expressions amongst the Assamese. Hindi was used by nearly 4 per cent, and Mundari by nearly 2 per cent of the people censused in Darrang in 1901. Assamese is described by Dr Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali.* It comes from

* Report on Census of India, 1901, Vol. I, p. 324.

Bihar through Northern Bengal and not from Bengal Proper. The plural and feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax, and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh being converted into h by the Assamese, and ch into s. Kachari, or Bodo as it is more properly called, is a fairly rich language remarkable for the ease with which roots can be compounded together. A grammar of this language has been published by the Reverend S. Endle.*

Caste.

A complete absence of distinction is the dominant note in the caste organization of Darrang. Brahmans, Baidyas, and Kayasthas are the aristocracy of Eastern India, and each of these three castes is very poorly represented in the district. The Ganak would rank after the Kayastha in ordinary estimation in Assam, but unfortunately in Mangaldai, where the majority of the Darrang Ganaks are found, they have fallen from their high estate and have sunk to a very low position in the social scale. Next to the high class Ganak come the Kalita and Kewat, but these two castes, though numerous in the neighbouring district of Kamrup, barely total 31,000 in Darrang. Other castes conspicuous by their absence are the two great race castes of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, the Ahom and the Chutiya, who between them number less than 7,000 souls. The bulk of the indigenous inhabitants were probably originally Kacharis who, with their kinsmen the Rabhas, reached a total in 1901 of nearly 79,000

* Shillong Secretariat Press, 1884.

persons, six-sevenths of whom were found in Mangaldai. The Kachari, on conversion to Hinduism, is admitted into the ranks of the Koch, and it is only natural that these Koches (47,000) should be numerically the strongest section of the Hindus in the district. The Jugis and Nadiyals, both of whom come low in the social scale, are fairly strongly represented, and in the Tezpur subdivision the cooly castes, such as the Munda, Santal, Bhuiya, and Oraon are found in considerable numbers. Two hundred and three Europeans were censused in the district in 1901, 167 of whom were living in the *sadr* subdivision. Brief notes are appended describing the principal features of each of the indigenous castes, of whom there were 5,000 or more in the district in 1901 *

A certain proportion of the Brahmans are foreigners, **Brahmans.**

Males	...	3,634
Females	...	2,798

either natives of Bengal acting in some ministerial capacity, or Nepalese who have settled in the district,

but the great majority are natives of Assam. Most of them subsist on the profits of their farms, which they either plough with hired labour, or, if they are too poor to engage a servant, cultivate with the hoe, as a Brahman is not allowed to touch the plough with his own hands. Of the remainder some take service as cooks, some act as priests; though the number of the latter is not large, as few of the Brahmans of Darrang are sufficiently well versed in the *shastra* to be qualified for the priest-

* An alphabetical glossary of all castes censused in the Province will be found in Ch. XI of the Assam Census Report for 1901.

hood. The majority of the Brahmans in the district live near Mangaldai town and in the Patharughat tahsil.

Ganaks.

The origin of the Ganaks is obscure, and, though they claim to be Brahmans, they are regarded with much contempt in Bengal and the Surma Valley. This may possibly be due to their traditional occupation, astrology, as there is a tendency to look down on Brahmans who act as priests or take any practical part in the business of religion. In Assam Proper, the better class of Ganaks occupy a much more dignified position, and are regarded by the common people as ranking second only to the Brahmans. This difference in social estimation is no doubt partly due to the fact that the number of really high caste Hindus amongst the Assamese is comparatively small. Both the Koch and Ahom kings were members of non-Aryan races, and the Ganaks were held in high favour by the rulers of those tribes, a factor which counts for much in Assamese society. Most of the Ganaks of Darrang were censused in Mangaldai, and many of the Mangaldai Ganaks are said to be degraded. They are divided into five classes—(1) Raj Ganaks, who enjoyed the favour of the native rulers, (2) Deori Ganaks, who were employed in temples, (3) Biah Ganaks, who were professional singers, (4) Natoa Ganaks, who were professional dancers, and (5) Bilati Ganaks, who were cultivators. The first three classes do not intermarry with the other two, whose customs are apparently those of the ordinary low caste Assamese.

Males	...	2,963
Females	...	3,283

The Jugis are a low caste, whose traditional occupation **Jugis.** is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale ; but, like other humble castes, they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account, they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation of Siva. Very few Jugis now earn their living as weavers, and the caste as a whole has taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

In the Otolā and Punia mauzas of Mangaldai there is a section of the caste known as the Kankuruli Jugis. Their social position is extremely low, they bury their dead, have no religious ceremony at marriage or death, and have only recently obtained gosains. The Katani Jugis emphatically deny that they were ever in any way connected with the Kankurulis. The Katanis are said to have entered the Province in the days of Ballal Sen, and till the time of the Darrang Raja Madho Narayan (1728—1778 A. D.) their position was extremely low. Under his patronage they made considerable advances in the social scale, and they now enjoy a better position in Darrang than in any other part of the Assam Valley. They claim to rank with the Koch, and several gosains have certified that the higher castes may take water from their hands.

The Kacharis or Bara (mispronounced Bodo), as they **Kacharis.** call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found, not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but in

Kacharis.		
Males	...	33,422
Females	...	29,804

the Garo Hills and in Hill Tippera, south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it, though, as a matter of fact, apart from the southward movement of the Miris and Chutiyas, most of the tribal migrations of which we have actual knowledge have been from the south towards the north. This was the direction of the Ahom invasion in the thirteenth century, the traditions of the Nagas all represent them as coming from the south, and the northward movement of the Kuki tribes was only stopped by the intervention of the British Government. On the other hand, Mr. Dundas quotes a prayer used by the Dimasa in the North Cachar Hills, which supports the view that the tribe came from the north-east. It refers to a huge peepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. The inscriptions recorded on copper plates in the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D. refer to the conquest of Kamarupa by a foreign dynasty, which was subsequently replaced by a king of the line of Narak.* It is possible that the Kacharis

* *Vide J. A. S. B. Vol., LXVII, Part I, No. 1, 1898, page 99.*

were the invading force, and that they were afterwards dislodged from Gauhati, when they might not unnaturally have retreated towards the Dhansiri valley.

The Kachari kingdom was one of the strongest powers with which the Ahoms were confronted when they entered the valley of the Brahmaputra. Their capital was located at Dimapur on the Dhansiri river, and at one time they were in possession of the western part of Sib-sagar, and the greater part of Nowgong. Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536, and the Kachari king was compelled to move his capital to Maibang. Subsequently they migrated to the plains of Cachar, and the last representative of the line was assassinated there in 1830. It seems, however, doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of the Brahmaputra were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa; and, though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang no doubt from the same stock, but there is no evidence to show that they were ever united by the tie of a common nationality, or that the Kacharis of Darrang were more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar, than are the Rabhas or Lalungs.

The following legend, which is prevalent amongst the Dimasa, has been reported by Mr. Dundas. It would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Darrang:—

**Difference
between
Dimasa and
Bodo.**

"Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day, but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety."

**Mode cus-
toms.**

The names of various clans are still remembered in Darrang, but they seem to be of a totemistic origin, and, at the present day, the tribe is not split up into any endogamous or exogamous subdivisions. Their social position is of course low, but the Hindu gosains are willing to receive them as their disciples, and, if they are prepared to abandon their pork and beer, will even enrol them as members of the Koch caste. The bulk of the Kacharis live on the grassy plains at the foot of the Himalayas, and are especially numerous in what are known as the Kachari Duars, *i. e.* Kariapara, Buriguma, Khaling, and Chatgari and in the Kowpati mauza. Their villages are surrounded with fences, but present a dirty and untidy appearance, as pigs and fowls are allowed to wander about in all directions. Agriculture is their normal occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. They are fully alive to the advantages of irrigation and conduct the water of the hill streams on to their fields through little artificial channels. But, though efficient

agriculturists, they have not that contempt for daily labour which is so marked a characteristic of the Assamese. They readily take work on tea gardens, and in 1901 nearly 14,000 Kacharis were censused on the plantations.

Though still using their tribal form of speech in their own villages, most of them can speak and understand Assamese. The national religion is of the ordinary animistic type. The principal god is called Siju, and used formerly to be represented by the cactus (*euphorbia splendens*) found growing in the courtyard of every Kachari house; but of recent years the tulsi plant has largely superseded the cactus, as the outward and visible sign of the deity. In addition to Siju, there are a large number of other spirits most of which are hostile to men; and the principal object of religion is to ascertain in times of trouble the name of the spirit responsible, and the way in which it may most easily be appeased. The dead are usually burned, but are sometimes buried, from motives of economy. Marriage is generally by purchase, a bride costing from Rs. 50 to Rs. 70, and, where the man is unable to provide this sum, he goes to live with his father-in-law and works for him. A year's labour is only reckoned as being worth from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30, but it must be borne in mind that during the time that he is working for his bride the man is fed and clothed by his father-in-law. Pregnancy prior to marriage does not entail any social disability, provided that the father acknowledges the child and is a Kachari by caste.

Kalita.

The following account of the origin of the Kalita caste

Males ...	... 9,690	is reproduced from the Report on
Females	... 8,146	the Census of 1901.

"There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who, fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kul-lupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and does not appear to be supported by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled in Assam, at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word "Kalita" was originally applied to all Aryans who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional subcastes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the "hom" ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can inter-marry with and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita, and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of

these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two."

Early marriage is common in Goalpara but not in Assam Proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant does not forfeit her position in the society unless her lover is of a lower caste. The bulk of the Kalitas were censused in the Tezpur, Chutia, and Patharughat tahsils.

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners, and most of **Kayastha.**

Males ...	.. 1,048	them earn their living as Govern-
Females ...	... 641	ment servants or tea garden clerks.

Kalitas who have risen above the necessity for manual labour also frequently describe themselves as Kayasthas.

Kewats.

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose hands Brahmans will take water and who, according to Assamese ideas, rank immediately after the

Males	...	7,546
Females	...	6,077

Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats, as the Jaliya, or fishing subdivision of the caste, occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common except the name, Kewat or Kaibartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The ordinary occupation of the caste is agriculture, but a few of them have succeeded in reaching that desirable position in which the pen takes the place of the ploughshare as a means of livelihood. A respectable Brahman acts as their priest.

The Nadiyals.

Males	...	5,491
Females	...	5,291

The Doms, or as they prefer to call themselves Nadiyals, are the boating and fishing caste of Assam. They are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though the manners and customs of the Jaliya Kaibartta do not differ materially from that of the Assamese Nadiyal, except in the following particulars. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghokota* net, and in theory only sell their fish on the river's bank within a paddle's throw of the boat, whereas the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market. The Nadiyals are probably descended from the aboriginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam

before the Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly in their habits and particular in their observance of the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for the objectionable expression "Dom," which undoubtedly they have borne for centuries, by saying that they were the last of the Assamese to be converted from Buddhism. They are darker in complexion than most of the Assamese, but have a good physique, and by no means uncomely faces. Their women are most prolific and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittia Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be descended from a Brahman father and Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and inter-marry with Nadiyal girls. In Mangaldai, the Nadiyals are said to be divided into three sections, the Muchi or traders, the Kheoli or wholesale, and the Machua or retail fish-sellers.

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race and appear to be an offshoot of the Garos. **The Rabhas.**

Males	...	7,517
Females	...	7,914

Their language is closely akin to Garo, and their original habitat seems to have been the northern slopes of the

Garó Hills. Certain sections of the tribe, which live on the borders of that district, have no word for north and south, but describe the former idea by Bhutan, the latter by Tura; a fact which pretty clearly indicates the locality from which they originally came. Most of the Rabhas have, however, left their ancestral home and settled in the Mangaldai subdivision of Darrang, Kamrup, and Goalpara. In Goalpara, Rabhas are divided into the following seven sections—Rangdania, Pati, Maitariya, Koch, Bitlia, Dahuria, and Sangha; but these subdivisions are not recognized in Darrang. There the tribe is divided into various groups which have apparently a totemistic origin. The *phalmals* fast when their ploughs break, the *maihals* when their buffaloes die, the *baghuals* mourn the death of a tiger, and so on. Like the other animistic tribes they are fond of beer, pork, and chicken, but they abstain from beef. Their villages are not unlike those of the Kacharis. They have gardens, and fruit trees, but pigs and fowls do much damage and the homestead is very different from the green dankery of bamboos, fruit trees, and vegetables which surrounds the houses of the Assamese. Agriculture is their usual occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. What money they require is usually obtained by selling rice or poultry or by working on the roads or on tea gardens. Adult marriage is in vogue, and the lover is required to pay for the object of his affections. The usual price is from Rs. 25 to Rs. 60, but, if the money is not forthcoming, the bridegroom works in the house of his father-in-law; one year's labour being considered

the equivalent of about Rs. 20 in cash. Vermillion is smeared on the bride's forehead, a practice which does not obtain amongst most of the aboriginal tribes, but the essential part of the ceremony is the killing of two fowls and the feasting of the villagers. The Pati Rabhas go further than this, and model their procedure as closely as possible on the Hindu ceremony. The dead too are generally burned, unless an epidemic is in progress, when it is thought that the infection might be conveyed in the smoke of the funeral pyre. In their unconverted state they worship deities known as Bharali and Kubir Gosain and make offerings to the spirits of the forest and the marsh. Like the Kacharis they are very sceptical as to the possibility of a life after death.

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, **The Raj-bansi or Koch.** apparently of Mongolian origin, which, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur, and by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Koch king had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that at the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste into which new converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower

Males	...	24,064
Females	..	23,363

Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place, and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off. The principal subdivision is the Bar Koch, who are looked upon as a clean Sudra caste and from whose hands Brahmans will take water. The same distinction is not accorded to the Saru Koch, though they conform in most essentials to the somewhat lax standard of Hinduism exacted in Assam. Three other subdivisions are graded in accordance with the extent to which they have forsworn the attractions of unconverted life. The Kamtali abstain from intoxicating liquor and usually from pork ; the Hiremia still keep pigs but no longer indulge in the use of liquor; while the Madahi are Hindus only to the extent of having taken *saran*, and still permit themselves great freedom in all matters of food and drink. The Koches are widely distributed all over the district, but are especially numerous in Mangaldai.

Religion.

Classified by religion the population of Darrang was distributed in the following proportions in 1901 :—Hindus, 71 per cent ; Animistic tribes, 23 per cent ; and Muhammadans, 5 per cent.

Saktism.

Of the Hindus who specified their sect, 27 per cent returned themselves as Saktists, or worshippers of the reproductive powers of nature as manifested in the female. Two-fifths of these Saktists were, however, censused on the tea gardens, and a considerable number of the Saktists in the villages were probably ex-garden coolies. To people such as these, Saktism, with its toleration of

liquor and animal sacrifice, would appeal more strongly than the milder and more civilized tenets of the Vaishnavites. Appended to this chapter will be found a list of the temples in Darrang which are endowed with grants of land. They are styled temples for want of a better name, though many of them now are nothing more than little huts of reeds and thatch.

Sivaitism is the counterpart of Saktism, and is concerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, only 1,656 persons in Darrang professed this special form of Hinduism. Sivaitism.

Seventy-two per cent of the Hindus who returned their sect in 1901 declared their adherence to the milder tenets of the Vaishnavites. This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Assam Census Report for 1901 : Vaishnavism.

Sankar Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A.D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who, according to tradition, had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the king of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal.* Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste, and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found his injunction a

* The Assamese do not admit that Sankar Deb was, in any sense of the word, a disciple of Chaitanya.

counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the sattra at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from small-pox in the neighbourhood of the sattra is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmins re-asserted their influence, and, shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects, called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste, and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas," as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no god but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognize Brahmins as their gossains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour. The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal.

Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophized the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached

the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain ; Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition. Thirty-nine per cent. of the Vaishnavites in Darrang in 1901 were said to be members of the Mahapurushia sect, the great majority of whom were censused is the *sadr* subdivision.

Every Vaishnavite is the disciple of some particular Gosains and Sattras. gosain or priest, to whom each year he sends an offering which varies from four annas to four or five rupees, according to his means. These subscriptions are collected by the *medhi*, or agent of the gosain, who is accorded a position of some dignity at village feasts, and sometimes ranks as high as the *gaobura*, or head man appointed by the Government. For the Mahapurushias the centre of religious life is Barpeta. In the eastern portion of the district most of the Vaishnavites, who are not Mahapurushias, are disciples of the great gosains of Auniati, Dakhinpat, and Garamur, whose *sattras* are situated on the Majuli in the Sibsagar district ; though some are followers of the Kuruabahi gosain of Nowgong, and others of the Moamaria gosain of Lakhimpur. In Mangaldai, the great gosains of the Majuli claim many followers, but a certain number of the people are the disciples of the petty gosains whose *sattras* are situated in Darrang. A

list of these *sattras* is appended to this chapter. In each village there is a *namghar* or large barn like structure, in which the people assemble for prayer and song, and which serves as a centre for the religious and social life of the place.

**Muham-
madanism.**

Only one-twentieth of the population in 1901 declared themselves to be followers of the Prophet. The great bulk of these persons were living in the Mangaldai subdivision, about half of them being inhabitants of the Patharughat tahsil, which is situated in the extreme south-west corner of the district. In the seventeenth century A.D., the Muhammadans were, from time to time, in possession of Gauhati and the whole of Kamrup, and were able to make their influence felt immediately beyond their borders. But the expeditions they despatched up to the Bhareli would naturally have no permanent effect, and in the eastern part of the district they did not make any converts. After the expulsion of the Musalmans from Kamrup in 1681 A. D. the simple villagers, who had been converted to the faith of Islam, began to forget the principles of their religion, and to be gradually affected by the customs of their Hindu neighbours. They practised circumcision and offered prayers after the Muhammadan fashion it is true, but they could not read the Koran, and service was held in the open fields, as there were no buildings set apart for the purpose. They dressed, shaved, and worshipped idols like Hindus, they eschewed beef and declined to kill a cow, and in times of sickness and trouble endeavoured to obtain relief by reciting *mantras* and singing hymns. This state of affairs is said

to have continued till 1880, when a revival of the true Muhammadan faith was inaugurated by a preacher called Zalkad Ali or Safi Saheb, who came from Gauhati and spent some years in the subdivision of Mangaldai. Fired by his example the Muhammadans abandoned their Hindu superstitions, allowed their beards to grow, and took to eating beef. Thatched houses were erected to serve as mosques, and the ordinary villager at the present day conforms, outwardly at any rate, to the dictates of the Muhammadan faith. They have not, however, succeeded in entirely freeing themselves of the ideas they borrowed from the Hindus, and, when cholera or small-pox appear in epidemic form, secretly recite *mantras*, in the hope that by this means they may be preserved from falling ill. Cases of proselytism are extremely rare, and, during the last fifteen years, only two persons in the whole of the Patharughat tahsil are said to have been converted to the faith of Islam.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a **Animism.** clear and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and the unconverted tribesmen are no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking, their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. But the way in which the world came into exist-

ence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small-pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can.

The great bulk of the animistic population was censused in Mangaldai in the Kalaigaon tahsil and the mauzas at the foot of the Bhutan Hills, and more than two-thirds of them were Kacharia.

Minor religions.

Religions which were not strongly represented in the district in 1901 were:—Buddhists (494), Jains (269), Brahmos (35), and Sikhs (9). Nearly all the Buddhists are temporary visitors who come down during the cold weather to the fairs held at the foot of the hills, and from there disperse about the country. There are, however, three Bhutia families, who for the last 25 years have been living in the Paneri grant village in mauza Jhaprabari in Mangaldai; and a few of the Nepalese settlers describe themselves as Buddhists. The Jains are “Kaiyas,” or merchants from Rajputana, who have succeeded in securing a practical monopoly of the wholesale trade of the district. The Brahmos are educated natives, most of whom were censused in Tezpur town,

The Christian population of Darrang is not large, and, **Christians.** in spite of the efforts of a representative of the Society for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts, who for many years has laboured amongst the Kachari population of Mangaldai, there were only 1,128 native Christians in 1901. The great majority of those who returned their sect were members of the Anglican communion, but nearly 300 natives took refuge in the generic term of "Kistan," without pledging themselves to support any one of the numerous sects into which that religion is divided. Christianity seems, however, to be spreading steadily, if very slowly, as in 1881 there were only 235 native Christians and, in 1891, 642.

The occupations recorded at the census of 1901 were **Occupation.** divided into eight main classes, and the numbers returned under each head were as follows :—

	Total number.	Percentage.
Government... ..	1,192	...
Pasture and agriculture... ..	311,518	92
Personal services	3,877	1
Preparation and supply of material substances, ...	9,607	3
Commerce, transport and storage	3,437	1
Professions	1,853	1
Unskilled labour not agricultural	1,774	
Means of subsistence independent of occupation	4,055	2

The district is a purely rural one, and no less than 92 per cent of the population were supported by agriculture. Nearly one-fourth of these persons were employed as garden coolies, and the immense majority of the remainder were small farmers who hold their land direct from the State, and cultivate it with their own hands. Most of them were found in Mangaldai, where the

representatives of the family of the Darrang Rajas hold a considerable area at privileged rates of revenue. There were altogether in the district in 1901, 16,468 persons returned as tenants and their dependents. Others were garden coolies who rent land which had been prepared for cultivation by the Assamese. There is, however, in the district such an abundance of good land awaiting settlement that the number of tenants must of necessity be small, and there is little risk of oppressive rents being asked or paid. The only non-agricultural occupation, if occupation it can be called, which supported as much as one per cent of the total population was begging. The majority of these beggars were women, and were probably old widows supported by the charity of their neighbours.

**Reasons for
preponderance of
agriculture.**

The extraordinary preponderance of agriculture as a means of occupation is due to two causes. In the first place the district is a purely rural one, it contains only one small town, and the urban population is only a little more than one per cent of the whole. There is, moreover, an almost complete absence of the functional castes. There is no village barber or dhobi in the Assam Valley, and, though there are a considerable number of Jugis in Darrang, they no longer earn their living at the loom. It would hardly be correct to say that they have forsaken their traditional occupation, as they, in common with most of the villagers in Darrang, are weavers. The work is, however, carried on by the women; and only enough clothing is produced to satisfy the requirements of the family, or perhaps to leave a few silk cloths over to sell when money is wanted to satisfy the

land revenue demand. Occupation has not been specialized in the Assam Valley, and each household supplies almost all its simple wants. The fishing and boating castes are not strongly represented, and many of their members have either abandoned their traditional occupation for agriculture, or have, at any rate, preferred to return it as a more respectable avocation on the census schedules. The number of priests in Darrang is also small. The occupations returned at the census of 1901 were divided into 520 separate classes, and the figures for each class will be found in Part II of the Report on the Census of that year. These figures do not, however, lend themselves readily to review, as agriculture is practically the beginning and end of all things in Darrang.

The forms of marriage in vogue are the *hompura*,* * Marriage customs. or full Hindu rite, when the sacred fire is lighted and a priest is engaged to perform the ceremony; the *khari moni pindha*, in which a feast is given to the friends and relations and ornaments are given to the girl; and the system under which the bridegroom, who is called a *caponiya*, enters the house of his prospective father-in-law, and works for his wife as Jacob worked for Rachel. Brahmans, Kayasthas, and well-to-do Kalitas invariably perform the *hompura* ceremony, which sometimes costs as much as Rs. 500. This expenditure is incurred on the purchase of ornaments and clothing, on the payment of priests, musicians, and palki bearers, and on a feast to the relations and friends, the principal ingredients of

*A description of this ceremony as practised in Assam will be found on p. 63 of the Census Report for 1901.

which are rice, molasses, curds and betelnut. The practice of taking a bride price is fairly common, especially in the western part of the district. In this particular there is a great difference between the customs in vogue in Upper and Lower Assam. In Upper Assam it is considered a mark of respectability to give your daughter away; in Lower Assam the custom of asking a bride price is almost universal, even amongst the Brahmans. Darrang, as is natural, occupies a more or less intermediate position, and on the west attorns to the customs of Lower, and on the east to the customs of Upper Assam. If the price demanded is too high the young people often take the law into their own hands, and the girl arranges to have herself abducted; as, when her lover has once obtained possession of her person, he is generally able to induce the parents to be more moderate in their demands. This form of marriage by capture is very common amongst Nadiyals, Brittial Baniyas, and Charals or Namasudras.

The *caponiya* is generally accorded all the privileges of a husband, as soon as the parents of the girl are satisfied that he intends to remain faithful to his engagements. In Upper Assam the *caponiya* is looked down upon, but his position is somewhat better in Darrang. Marriage, even by the simplest rites, entails a heavy charge upon the bridegroom. The ordinary cultivator seems to spend about one hundred rupees upon his wedding, a sum out of all proportion either to his capital or income. The result is that many men have to borrow at high rates of interest to obtain a wife, and are

often crippled for years by the expenses incurred on the occasion of their marriage. Ahoms are often married by the *chaklong* rite, in which the box in which betelnut is carried (*temi*) and the knife with which it is cut (*katari*) are exchanged, and the nuptial knot is tied. The *Jhopa goriya* form of marriage is also in use amongst the Nadiyals at the eastern end of the district. The bride and bridegroom are led round five or six baskets, and the one raises and the other, following close behind, closes the lids.

Feasts, singing parties, and *bhaonas* or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the road side, and on a winter's morning the traveller who is early abroad frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the pleasures of the previous night. The *dol jatra* or festival in honour of Krishna in February or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro, and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of his amorous exploits with the milk maids of Brindaban, is observed indeed, but with much less ceremony than in other parts of India.* The *Janmastami* in honour of Krishna's birth in August or September, and the *Sivaratri* in memory of Siva in March, are kept as fasts rather than feasts. The Durga puja is observed by Saktists.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three **The Bihus.** Bihus, and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and

* This festival is, however, in high favour with the garden coolies, by whom it is called the Fagua.

Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik Bihu is celebrated on the last day of Asvin (about October 14th), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of god, and, in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry, the people take cold food, such as curds, molasses, plantains, and cold rice. The Magh Bihu is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (about January 14th). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw piled round a central pole are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day, the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires; a very necessary precaution, as, at this season of the year, the mornings are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh Bihu is to some extent a children's festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the smaller boys, who sing and dance, and feast in small grass huts that have been constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh Bihu, which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th), is in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice, and are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relatives, and offer them presents of cloth and other things. Buffalo fights are organized in the rice fields, but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. This Bihu is an occasion of some license, as boys and girls dance together in the fields and sing suggestive songs, and lapses from chastity between members of the same caste

are considered almost venial. This is the season of the year when runaway matches are most common, and during the next few weeks the outraged but avaricious parent, complaining of the abduction of his daughter, is by no means an uncommon sight in the local courts. The *sradh* ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August—September, and that of Madhab three days before the *Janmastami*. All work is laid aside on these two days, and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of hymns.

STATEMENT A.

Sattras.

Mauza.	Name of Sattra.	Mauza.	Name of Sattra.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION. BRAHMAN GOSAIN.		MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION. BRAHMAN GOSAIN.	
Haleswar ...	Patikhathi (Bakori).	Chinakona ...	Supuha.
Mahabhairab ...	Muroli. ...	Mangaldai ...	Boinara.
KAYASTHA GOSAIN.			Autola.
Bargaon ...	Bargaon ...		Bhagavati.
Haleswar. {	Balipukhuri ...		Devananda.
	Gatanga.	Sarabari ...	Haripur.
Mahabhairab.	Bali.		
	Boralimara.		
	Ketekibari.		
	Modarguri.		
	Nikamal.		

STATEMENT B:

Temples.

Mauza in which situated.	Name of temple.	AMOUNT OF LAND HELD		Name of founder and date of foundation.	Brief description of temple building.
		Reve- nue free.	Half rates.		
TEZPUR SUB-DIVISION. Barbhogia...	Baneswar ...	...	83	Not known.	Thatched roof with reed and plaster walls.
	Jogeswar ...	...	33	Rudra Singh about 1705 A.D.	Ditto
	Muktinath...	...	68	Not known.	Ditto
	Nandikeswar	...	1,092	Rudra Singh in 1697 A. D.	Thatched roof brick wall, stone floor.
	Rudrapad ...	...	301	Sib Singh about 1730 A. D.	A shelter without walls over a stone on which there are two foot-prints of Siva.
	Saubbagya Madhab	...	656	Rudra Singh in 1707 A.D.	Thatched house with reed and plaster walls.
	Sukleswar ...	...	7	Not known.	Ditto
Barchola ...	Singri ...	...	106	Do. ...	Masonry building.
Bargaon ...	Kirang ...	...	144	Do.	Thatched house with reed and plaster walls.
	Orang ...	...	367	Do.	Ditto
Bishnath ...	Bardol ...	22	...	Not known ...	Ditto
	Basudeb ...	12	...	Rajeswar Singh in 1758 A. D.	There was originally a brick temple, which now has fallen into disrepair.

Manza in which situated.	Name of temple.	AMOUNT OF LAND HELD		Name of founder and date of foundation.	Brief description of temple building.
		Revenue free.	Half rates.		
		Bighas	Righas		
Bishnath— (contd.)	Bishnath ...	908	...	Gadadhar Singh in 1685 A. D.	There is no building but a lingam which goes under water in the rains.
	Bauramadhab,	32	...	Sib Singh about 1730 A. D.	Thatched house with reed and plaster walls.
	Chandi ...	2	...	Gadadhar Singh about 1690 A.D.	Granite floor, brick wall with tin roof.
	Kamaleswar...	146	...	Kamaleswar Singh about 1800 A. D.	Reed walls plastered with mud, thatched roof.
	Purba Sankar	90	...	Sib Singh about 1730 A. D.	Ditto
	Surja Madhab	125	...	Gadadhar Singh about 1685 A. D.	Ditto
	Uma ...	100	...	Sib Singh in 1741 A. D.	Reed walls plastered with mud, iron roof.
	Dulal Madhab	...	72	Not known ...	Reed walls plastered with mud, thatched roof.
Chutia ...	Nag Sankar...	837	...	Naga Matta ...	Reed walls plastered with mud, iron roof.
	Dhandi ...	...	232	Rudra Singh about 1705 A.D.	Thatched house with reed and plaster walls.
Gohpur ...	Kallani ...	...	72	Not known ...	Ditto
	Phulbari ...	...	318	Rudra Singh about 1705 A.D.	Ditto

Mauza in which situated.	Name of temple.	AMOUNT OF LAND HELD		Name of founder and date of foundation.	Brief description of temple building.
		Revenue free.	Half rates.		
		Bighas	Bighas		
Haleswar,	Haleswar ...	...	902	Rudra Singh about 1705 A.D.	Masonry floor and walls and thatched roof.
	Sukleswar ...	...	75	Not known ...	Brick floor, thatched roof and reed wall.
Mahabhairab	Bhairabi ...	...	864	Do.	Brick wall and corrugated iron roof.
	Bhairabpad ...	...	67	Do.	Masonry floor and walls, thatched roof.
	Hinduleswar...	...	97	Do.	Brick floor, corrugated iron roof and reed walls.
	Mahabhairab.	...	155	Do.	Brick walls and corrugated iron roof.
	Tingeswar ...	...	33	Do.	Masonry floor and walls and thatched roof.
MANGALDAI SUB-DIVISION.					
Chinakona...	Tamreswar ...	28	873	Do.	Temple is of timber and thatch.
Dipila ...	Rudreswar ...	...	587	Do.	Do.
Howli Mohanpur.	Lura Gosain	789	...	Do.	Do.
Petuachubri	Buri Gosaini...	803	...	Do.	Do.
	Deolpur ...	91	...	Do.	Old brick temple, is in ruins, a temporary house is built every year.
	Nalkamara ...	4½	...	Do.	Temple is of timber and thatch.
Silpota ...	Mura ...	...	669	Do.	Do.
Sonaigaon ...	Bhairabkunda	46	...	Do.	No temple. People go to bathe in the Kunda (pool), which is considered to be sacred.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulses—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield and value of crops—Floods and irrigation—General remarks—Live stock—Grazing—Cattle disease—Commencement of tea industry—The boom in the early sixties—Scarcity of labour—Collapse in 1866—Expansion of the industry—Labour supply—Site of tea gardens—Soil—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Outturn and prices—Forests—System of management—The reserved forests—Timber trees—Rubber—List of important reserves.

The staple food crop of the district is rice, which in 1902-03 covered 67 per cent of the total cropped area. **Crops grown.** Other important crops are tea (14 per cent), and orchard and garden crops (9 per cent), but a large part of the area shown under this head is occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Mustard occupied 5 per cent of the total cropped area, miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, 4 per cent, and sugarcane 0·7 per cent. Wheat, barley, and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under these three crops in 1902-03 was only 27 acres. A small quantity of maize is also grown

by foreigners. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs. The area under different crops will be found in Table VII.

Rice. Sali.

Rice falls under three main heads—*sali*, *ahu*, and *bao*, the proportion of the total rice area normally occupied by each of these three classes, being—*sali* 79 per cent, *ahu* 18 per cent, and *bao* 3 per cent. *Sali* dhan, or transplanted winter rice, is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*kothintoli*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times, and is generally manured with cowdung and sweepings. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June. It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles (*akhi*) to the field. Here they are planted out in hand-

fuls (*gocha*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, but the handfuls are generally placed about 18 inches apart. It is usually the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and, unless they are weak and stunted, the tops are cut off at the time when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is generally carried out by women. The work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. Women are not employed on this work in Mangaldai, but in Tezpur, as in Upper Assam, both sexes cut the grain. The reapers grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary, the *muthis* are made into large sheaves. Six to eight *muthis* form a *thor* or *jhap*, and five or six *thors* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biriya*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main divisions, *lahi* and *bar*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *bar*, and though the grain is of a finer quality the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains, and which are thus not suitable for *bar*. Altogether there are said to be no less than 68 different varieties of *sali* dhan in the district.

Bao dhan. *Bao* dhan is sown broadcast about the beginning of May, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sali*, and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the middle of December and is harvested in the same way as *sali*. Five-sixths of the *bao* crop is raised in the tahsils of Patharughat, Mangaldai, and Tezpur.

Ahu dhan. *Ahu* or summer rice is grown either on irrigated land in the submontane tracts (*khurma ahu*) or on low land near the Brahmaputra. For low land cultivation the usual procedure is as follows :—

In May the jungle is pressed down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojala kata*, and ploughing begins in January. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown, and the land again ploughed and harrowed, to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with

the soil. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind *botah boloah*, they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the end of August. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is often grown on the *chaporis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required when the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagori* (*saccharum spontaneum*) and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the jungle has been removed. After the third year it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clean the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site the peasant gets the further advantage of a manure of ashes for his next year's crop.

Kharma ahu is transplanted, and the system of cultivation does not differ materially from that employed in the case of *sali*, except that it is both sown and harvested much earlier than winter rice. It is generally grown on land which is irrigated from the hill streams, and is extensively cultivated in the north of Mangaldai. The bulk of the *ahu* in Darrang is, however, *chaporis ahu*.

Mustard, as has already been said, is usually grown **Mustard.** in conjunction with *ahu* on the riparian flats. The

jungle is cut down in February and March, and, if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps are dug out, and the land is then ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the beginning of November, and the plant is ready to be pulled from the field about the middle of February. It is generally left to dry for a few days, and is then tied in bundles and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle. Mustard is grown all along the banks of the Brahmaputra to a greater or a less degree. The area under this crop in the Patharughat tahsil is particularly large.

Pulses.

Pulse is usually grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra, in conjunction with summer rice and mustard, but a crop is often taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chaporis* if new land is taken up the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulse is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and

are then collected at the convenience of the cultivator. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but as the grains do not separate readily from the pods, their efforts are supplemented by a man with a flail. Several different kinds of pulse are grown, but nine-tenths of the crop belong to the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo* v. *radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo*) a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation, but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chaporis*. *Kala-mah* (*lathyrus sativus*), is grown, but not in any considerable quantities. It has a large yield, but does not fetch a high price. Pulse, like mustard, is usually grown on the river *chaporis*, but, while there is very little pulse in Gohpur, there is a certain amount of high land pulse in Balipara and Kalaigaon.

Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop. The seeds are generally sown in April, and the plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use ; but the area under jute is at present absolutely inconsiderable. Small patches of rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where it is heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the

Fibres.

outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

**Storage and
threshing of
grain.**

In the Mangaldai subdivision the rice is threshed as soon as it has been brought from the field, but in Tezpur the stalk and ear are stored together in the granary (*bhural*). When it is required for use the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing the paddy is stored in huge drums, called *dhol*s. They are made of split bamboo, and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung

**Agricultural imple-
ments.**

The plough.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts, the handle and body, which are usually all in one piece, the pole, which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke, which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrab, Director of Land Records and Agriculture, showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes to thresh out 7½ maunds of paddy.

is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs. and when cattle are used the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*doli bari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kor*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles (*kachi*), with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bindha*), with teeth nearly one foot in

Other Im-
plements.

length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock, when the plants are about six inches high. The *khanti*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then removed, and the pestle falls into a small hole, in a piece of wood sunk level with the ground, in which the grain is placed. The *dheki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse, but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar (*ural*) and a pestle (*mari*). All of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane. Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and, as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognized. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high, and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *телиа* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangala* or *Bam*, a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion off

sugar. The *Molaha* is a hard and thin variety of the *mugi*, and, where grown, is planted round the edge of the field. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dal (*cajanus Indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

The Tezpur tahsil and the Behali mauza are the principal centres for sugarcane. Very little cane is grown in the Mangaldai subdivision outside the Pat-harughat and Mangaldai tahsils, and not much there. Harvesting goes on from January to April.

The native form of mill is still very generally used by the Assamese for the extraction of the juice, but the iron mill, which is far more expeditious, is gradually coming into favour. The native mill consists of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are

Preparation
of molasses.

cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skilful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potter's clay. Two of these vessels are placed about nine feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*gholani*) shaped like a small dug out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

Causes affecting productivity of land.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes—the water-supply, the quality

of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. The first named factor is probably of most importance, as irrigated land in the submontane tracts yields bumper crops from poor and sandy soil. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *alatia*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria* and is particularly deep and soft. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata* or *moja*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptorisa acuta*), and *charaha* (*hispa acuesceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug, which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insect by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *charaha* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks, and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the

young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying.* Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Crabs (*kekora*) sometimes damage the stems of the crop on low-lying land when under water. Rain is wanted when *sali* rice is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *bao*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Garden
crops.
The plantain.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *monohar*, *cheni champa*, and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat smaller tree, the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris green, 1 lb. freshly slacked lime or flour, and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

generally grown near the homestead, where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure, but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of water-logging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep, and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take from eighteen months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn to fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution distilled from the sheaths and the corm is often used as a flavouring with curry, a practice which is mentioned by the Muhammadan historians of Mir Jumla's invasion. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharoni*, is used not only as a seasoning but as a hair wash and as a mordant with certain dyes.

The betelnut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as uni-^{Other}versally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the ^{garden}great trinity of trees in which the houses of the ^{crops.}

Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and are protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are ordinary spinach *pui* (*basella alba*), *jahi*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos lablab*), the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), the radish *niula* (*raphanus sativus*),

the sorrel *chuka sak* (*rumex vesicarius*), and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*).

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on

Sali	...	...	lbs.
Abu	...	...	1,000
Mustard	...	...	850
Molasses	...	...	500
		...	1,800

Yield and
value of
crops.

which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean, and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average about Re.1-11-0 per maund of unhusked grain in Tezpur and Re. 1-7-0 in Mangaldai. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sali* is about Rs. 33 in Tezpur and Rs. 28 in Mangaldai, while the value of the *ahu* crop is Rs. 28 or Rs. 24, according as it is raised in the eastern or western subdivision. For mustard the villagers generally get about Rs. 3-4 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth about Rs. 19-8-0. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place, and ranges from Rs. 5 to Rs. 10 per maund. The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from about Rs. 110 to Rs. 220.

**Floods and
irrigation.**

A considerable portion of the district is flooded in the rainy season by the Brahmaputra and its tributaries. The pressure on the soil is, however, very light, and there is no necessity at present to bring these submerged tracts under permanent cultivation. The Bhareli ruined a considerable area of good rice land when it changed its course some years ago, and the Gabharu, Dhansiri, Rowta, and Nanai all occasionally do a certain amount of damage. No protective works have yet been erected, but there is not as yet sufficient demand for land to render reclamation necessary. The Kacharis in the submontane mauzas combine together to dig little channels (*dorogs*) through which they bring the water of the rivers on to their rice fields.

**General
Remarks.**

Beyond occasionally selecting the best ears of grain for seed the villagers do little to improve the quality of their crops, and show little tendency to adopt new staples. Manure is seldom used except for sugarcane and garden crops, and to some extent for tea. Experiments in agriculture on a scientific scale have, however, been made by several gentlemen in Tezpur. Mr. Moti Lal Holdar, the manager of the Mornai Tea Estate, was very successful in raising different varieties of cotton, sugarcane, and tobacco. Mr. Wilde, the manager of the Bamgaon Tea Estate, opened a farm at Gamiri in 1903, and in 1905 had about 350 acres under cultivation. The crops raised included paddy, jute, khesari and mung dal, mustard, ground nut, ginger, turmeric, barley, oats, wheat, potatoes, tobacco, coriander and anise. Agricultural implements of English manufac-

ture have been successfully and economically worked upon this farm, notably a threshing machine and large ploughs. Agricultural experiments have also been made by Babu Syama Charan Moitra, a local pleader, who in 1905 had about 50 acres under cultivation.

The buffaloes of the district belong to three distinct breeds, the Assamese, Nepalese, and Bengali.* The Assamese are the largest of the three, and are fine upstanding animals with widely spreading horns. During the cold weather they are generally grazed in jungly tracts, and a wild bull often attaches himself to the herd, and becomes the sire of many of the calves. This continual infusion of a good strain of blood does much to maintain the excellence of the breed. The Bengali buffalo is a smaller and less imposing animal, and does not command so high a price. Nepalese buffaloes are also common. They are large animals but have smaller horns and longer tails than the Assamese variety. Assamese bulls cost from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, and cows from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60, but a Bengali buffalo can be purchased for rather less.

Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portion of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half naked boy, whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides and who guides it with a nose rope. In the *chaporis* the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or

* The information given in these paragraphs is taken from a note compiled by Mr. Darrah, Director of Land Records and Agriculture in 1887, and from reports received from the local Revenue Officers of Darrang.

wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputra which separates them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too, as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a simul tree, which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home. At night each animal is fastened by a nose rope to a post and sleeps on the bare ground. There are a large number of *mokhutis*, as these grazing camps are called, in the flooded tracts along the Brahmaputra, and on the high land near the hills. A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white and rich in fatty materials, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years, during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth.

Cattle.

Half-starved, under-sized, ill-bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total

indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly perhaps in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. No bulls are set aside to be the sires of the herd, and the cows are generally covered by a young and immature animal, who secures the object of his desires by his superior lightness and agility. The sire is often closely related to the dam, and she in her turn has had her strength exhausted by being covered when herself little more than a calf, and by subsequent breeding without the smallest intermission. The cattle are never groomed, and, when an epidemic breaks out, no attempt is made to isolate the sick. Everything, as Mr. Darrah says, is left to nature, from the moment when the most active, and therefore probably the youngest, bull of the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, until the progeny, after years of work and semi-starvation, dies neglected in some unfrequented jungle. Cows generally cost from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15, and bullocks from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30. The Bhutias bring down very fine cattle in the cold weather, but they are seldom purchased by the villagers in the neighbourhood, and it is said that they do not stand the heat well.

Live stock are generally grazed on the rice *pathars* **Grazing grounds.** after the crop has been carried, on high land, and in swamps and marshes till the water rises. During the rains, the villagers are said to experience some difficulty in obtaining fodder for their cattle in parts of the Māngaldai, Patharughat, and Tezpur tahsils, and rice straw is sometimes collected for the purpose.

Goats and sheep and ponies.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out-house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform as a protection against jackals. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and though sheep are brought down by the Bhutias in the cold weather, very few seem to remain on in the district. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, endurance or stamina. The Bhutia ponies are, however, hardy little animals, though they have neither pace nor manners. European residents are compelled to obtain all their horseflesh from Calcutta.

A census of livestock was taken in 1904, and disclosed the following results. Bulls and bullocks, 90,000 ; cows, 82,000 ; bull buffaloes, 19,000 ; cow buffaloes, 13,000 ; young stock, 93,000 ; sheep, 150 ; goats, 59,000 ; horses and ponies, 845.

Cattle disease.

The most common forms of cattle disease are foot and mouth disease (*chapku*), rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea, cholera (*marki*), *matikhua*, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight.

Commencement of tea industry.

Reference must now be made to tea, a crop which has done so much for the development of Darrang.

The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had been engaged in trade in the Province while it was still under native rule, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gun boats in 1824. In 1834, a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their numbers, Drs. Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths, to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were established, a small establishment was entertained under the general management of Mr. Bruce to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea, and cultivate them when discovered, and plants and seed were brought to Assam from China. Tea makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and in the following year some of the manufactured product was sent to England, where it met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which at the present day seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid ranging from 16s. to £1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1-10½d. to 2s. a pound.*

* Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from—

- (1) Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal No. xxxvii. Papers relating to Tea cultivation in Assam. Calcutta, 1861.
- (2) Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state and prospects of Tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet. Calcutta, 1868.
- (3) Papers regarding the Tea Industry in Bengal. Calcutta, 1873.

**The boom
in the early
sixties.**

The pioneer of tea in Darrang was a Mr. Martin, who opened a plantation at Balipara in 1854, and three years later started a garden at Haleswar. In 1855, the Assam Company started operations at Singri Parbat, and these were the only plantations in existence when Captain Comber submitted his report in 1859. The next four years were a period of steady but not abnormal or unwholesome expansion. About 1863, the possibility of making large fortunes out of tea attracted the attention of the speculating classes, and tea planting passed through a severe crisis, which was entirely due to the action of company promoters, who endeavoured to make money, not by manufacturing tea, but by hastily opening gardens to sell at most exorbitant prices to the credulous investor. The promulgation of the fee simple rules of 1861 was followed by a rush for land, which was aggravated by the orders of the Board of Revenue, who authorized District Officers to sell estates on a pen and ink sketch made by the applicant, before they had been properly surveyed and demarcated. Land thus obtained was hastily cleared of jungle, a few plants, the majority of which soon died, were hurriedly put out, and the place was sold to the unsuspecting public as a flourishing tea garden. To such a pitch was this procedure carried that there is one case on record, in which a manager received instruction from London, to clear and plant a certain area of waste land for delivery to a Company to whom it had been already sold as a tea plantation.

**Scarcity of
labour.**

Many of the planters, and some District Officers in Assam, thought that it was the duty of Government to

stimulate the slothful Assamese, and drive them to work on the plantations, by enhancing the land revenue assessment. This point of view did not commend itself to the Commissioner. Colonel Jenkins, who, while admitting that there was great want of industry and energy amongst the Assamese, declined to check their social improvement, or to reduce them to the unaccustomed misery of hard work, simply to provide the planters with cheap and abundant labour.*

It naturally followed that in spite of the high prices offered, local labour was not obtainable in sufficient quantities, and coolies, generally of the most miserable description, were sent up from Calcutta. The mortality in the depôts and on the journeys was appalling. In the four years, 1864 to 1867, the annual mortality in the largest dépôt ranged from 36 to 115 per cent of the average daily strength, the latter enormous rate being calculated on a daily average of no less than 458 souls.† Between 1863 and 1868, 54,352 coolies were imported to Assam, 1,712 of whom died *en route*. Even when the garden was reached the mortality was generally high, and was sometimes quite appalling. In the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of tea cultivation details are given for seven gardens in Upper Assam, on which the recorded mortality for half the year in 1865 ranged from 16 to 39 per cent.

* Letter No. 111, dated 24th October 1859.

† Report of the Commissioners, p. 28.

The returns submitted were declared by the Commissioners to be unsatisfactory, but in 1866, 4,366 deaths were recorded in Upper Assam, which was equivalent to a death-rate of 17·9 per cent on the total number remaining plus the total number of deaths. These days of high mortality have happily now passed away, and in 1902-03 the mortality amongst adult coolies in Darrang was only 39 per mille. It may, perhaps, be thought that even this is a high death rate for a population of adults, and in comparison with those recorded in England this is no doubt the case. But comparisons of this sort are most misleading, as though the death rate in Assam is very imperfectly recorded it is certain that it largely exceeds the rate for the more civilized countries of Western Europe. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that many of the coolies are recruited from the ranks of the physically unfit, that they suffer from the effects of a change of climate, and that when working in new clearances they are exposed to especially unfavourable conditions. The Commissioners* in 1868 considered that the Bhutan field force furnished a fair analogy to garden coolies, and pointed out that the death rate amongst that force was 16 per cent, or very little less than the death rate even in those days on Assam tea gardens. The planters spare neither trouble nor expense in their efforts to preserve the health of their employees, and many of the weakly ones who die would probably have lived no longer had they been allowed to remain in their own homes.

* Page 56 of their report.

During the tea boom, large sums were paid for labour and for seed, land which was little better than jungle was sold for preposterous prices, and the tea companies which were formed under these unfavourable conditions soon collapsed: 1866, 1867, and 1868 were years of great depression. Mr. A. C. Campbell, in a note written in 1873, describes how young men, who had been engaged in England, were turned adrift when the collapse came "in a most inhospitable country without a penny or a friend; some died, others had literally to beg their way out of Assam, most had to regret impaired constitutions, and all the loss of some of the best years of their life. In 1869, affairs began to take a more favourable turn. It was seen that properly managed gardens could be worked at a satisfactory profit, and that the estates of the bubble companies which had been bought for small prices after the great crash were doing well in the hands of their new owners. Since 1870, there has been an enormous expansion of the industry, and while the area under cultivation and the outturn have alike increased, the cost of production and the price obtained have steadily diminished. Like other industries, tea has experienced periods of prosperity and depression, but there has been no such boom with its inevitable collapse as occurred in the early sixties.

The first tea garden was opened in Darrang in 1854, but for some years the industry did not make very rapid progress. In 1870, the total outturn of manufactured tea was said to be 721,000 lbs., but little weight can be attached to these early estimates of outturn, as two years later it

**Collapse in
1866.**

**Expansion
of the in-
dustry.**

was said to be nearly 1,500,000 lbs. In 1882, the total area under plant was 14,289 acres with a yield of 4,356,000 lbs. Six years later the acreage had risen to 20,000 and the reported yield had nearly doubled. The industry continued to make steady progress till 1896 when there were 31,867 acres under tea with a total outturn of 11,474,000 lbs. Tea was at that time booming, and many of the owners of the excellent private gardens round Tezpur took advantage of this opportunity to sell out to joint stock companies. The extra capital obtained was employed in the extension of the cultivated area, and within the short space of three years the area under plant increased by nearly 9,000 acres. In 1900, the outturn of manufactured tea was reported to be 15,311,000 lbs., and the area under plant 41,708 acres. Since that date the industry has been passing through a period of depression, which was chiefly due to the abnormally rapid expansion of the outturn, to the large increase in the duty imposed in England, and to the difficulty in obtaining labour. Statistics for later years will be found in Table VII.

**Labour
supply.**

The Kacharis of Kamrup and Mangaldai are employed on the plantations in considerable numbers, but the bulk of the labour force is imported from other parts of India. During the ten years ending with 1890, 38,660 persons were brought up to the gardens and the total for the next decade was 79,924. 1896 (10,183), 1897 (12,464), and 1900 (11,358), were the years in which the largest numbers were imported. Statistics for later years will be found in the Appendix.

The abstract in the margin shows the areas from			which the labour force in 1901
	Number.	Percentage.	
Total	... 79,513		had been recruited. A consi-
Assam	... 19,440	24	derable proportion of those
Chota Nagpur	... 20,477	38	born in Assam are the children
Other parts of Bengal	10,228	13	of foreign coolies.
United Provinces	... 1,396	2	
Central Provinces	... 11,662	15	
Madras	... 2,827	4	

The journey from the recruiting districts is trouble-
 some and expensive, the class of persons capable of
 working successfully in the damp climate of Assam is
 limited, and of recent years the supply of labour avail-
 able has not been sufficient to satisfy the requirements
 of the planters. Special Acts have been passed to re-
 gulate the relations between the employers and their
 labour force. Careful provision is made for the welfare
 of the coolie. He is housed in neat and comfortable
 lines, he is provided with an excellent water-supply,
 generally drawn from masonry wells, and, when sick, he
 is cared for in a comfortable hospital by a native doctor
 working under the supervision of a European medical
 man. The provision of all these comforts and the im-
 portation of the labourers themselves cost large sums
 of money, which no one would be willing to expend
 without some guarantee that the coolies when imported
 would consent to remain on the plantation. This pro-
 tection is afforded by the law (Act VI of 1901), which
 lays down that a labourer, provided that he is well
 treated, must not leave the garden to which he is in-
 dentured before the expiry of his contract, unless he
 chooses to redeem it by a money payment. The simpler
 Act (XIII of 1859), which empowers a Magistrate to

The
labourers.

order a labourer who has taken an advance to complete the work on account of which the advance was given, is also very generally used.

**Site of tea
gardens.**

Some of the best plantations are situated on what is known as the high bank, a ridge of reddish loam, which runs from Sessa about eight miles north of Tezpur to Balipara. Other good estates have been carved out of the dense forest which lies near the foot of the Aka Hills, a little to the north of Barjuli. East of the Bhareli there are a considerable number of gardens occupying the central belt of land between the Brahmaputra and the hills. Tea in Mangaldai falls into two main groups. The older gardens are situated in the neighbourhood of Kalaigaon, while of recent years a considerable number of plantations have been opened on the high land at the foot of the hills, to the west of Bengbari church.

Further information with regard to the area, size and population of each garden in the district will be found in Appendix A.

**Soil
required
or tea.**

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of waterlogging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which in its natural state is covered with tree forest is usually considered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is deficient.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognized. **Varieties of plants.** Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{1}{8}$ inches in width, the Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety, Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety. During the boom in the nineties the price of good tea seed rose to as much as Rs. 150 per maund, but this was followed by a slump, when but a third of that sum became obtainable. Seed from the Ghoirali, Barjuli, and Namgaon estates is much esteemed.

**System of
cultivation.**

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year. Only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning, and any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. As an extreme remedy old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains, the ground is hoed up to the depth of eight or nine inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes in temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top-dressed with rich soil from a neigh-

bouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view. Matikalai (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*) is often sown amongst the bushes and hoed in as a green manure.

Plucking begins in April, and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks' time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a "flush," and there are usually eight to ten full "flushes" in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant," by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 18 hours, but if it is cold and wet as many as 48 hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about one hour, and after this the leaf is

**System of
manufac-
ture.**

placed in a cool room for about three hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called Broken Orange Pekoe, and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass are Orange Pekoe, Broken Pekoe, Pekoe, Souchong, and Fannings.

After the tea has been sorted, it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

**Outturn
and prices.**

The character of the outturn depends largely upon the season, but still more upon the garden and the system of manufacture followed. In 1868, the Commissioners estimated that the average outturn was about 240 lbs. per acre, but this estimate was probably too low, as the average yield in Darrang during the five years ending with 1903 was over 400 lbs. per acre. The introduction of machinery, and the improvement of the systems

of cultivation and management have rendered it possible to effect a large reduction in the cost of the tea when placed upon the market. In 1868, it was calculated that tea must be sold at 2s. a lb. to yield a profit. Twenty years later the average price obtained by tea from the Brahmaputra Valley was 8 annas 2 pies; and, though in 1894 it rose to 10 annas 5 pies, in 1898 it dropped to 6 annas 9 pies, and has since remained below that figure.

The forests of Darrang fall into two main classes, the **Forests.** reserved forests, which in 1902-03 covered an area of 321 square miles, and the unclassified State forests, which, in the same year, occupied the enormous area of 2,127 square miles. Unclassified State forest is, however, simply Government waste land, and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy *chur* or a huge expanse of low-lying land covered with high grass and reeds, and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former holder and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, *i.e.*, actual tree forest. It is impossible to give even the roughest estimate of the proportion of unclassified State forest which is actually under timber, but where the total area is so enormous it is obvious that, in a country with a heavy rainfall like Assam, the area covered with trees must be considerable.

The general control of the Government forests is entrusted to a Deputy or Assistant Conservator. The unclassified State forests are, however, under the immediate **System of management.**

management of the local revenue officials, and the villagers are allowed to remove all the forest produce needed for their own requirements free of royalty.

**The re-
served
forests.**

There are altogether seven reserved forests in Darrang, but three of them are only a few acres in extent. The Charduar, Balipara, and Nowduar reserves are a compact mass of evergreen forest, which covers an area of 291 square miles at the foot of the hills on either side of the Bhareli river. The Khalingduar forest is situated in the north of the Mangaldai subdivision, and is 27 square miles in area. From Table VIII it will be seen that the revenue derived from these reserves is very small, except in the case of the Charduar forest, where the receipts are swollen by the inclusion of the gross receipts from the rubber plantation. The greater part of the reserves are evergreen forest which does not require to be protected from fire. Special measures are, however, taken for the protection of the khair forest in the Khalingduar, and the patches of sal near Tezpur, and from Table IX it will be seen that the efforts of the Department are generally crowned with success. The statement appended to this chapter gives further details with regard to each of the principal reserves.

**Timber
trees.**

The most valuable timber trees in the district are *Sam* (*artocarpus chaplashu*), *Gunserai* (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), *Titasapa* (*michelia champaca*), *Makai* (*shorea assamica*), *Hollock* (*terminalia bicolorata*), *Simul* (*bombax malabaricum*), *Poma* (*cedrela toona*), *Khakan* (*duabanga soneratioides*), *Bola* (*morus laevigata*), *Sal* (*shorea robusta*), *Nahor* (*mesua ferrea*), *Khair* (*acacia catechu*), *Ajhar*

(*lagerstraemia reginae*), *Kathal* (*artocarpus integrifolia*), *Sonalu* (*cassia fistula*), *Gomari* (*gmelina arborea*) and *Uriam* (*bischoffia javanica*). They are used for posts, planks, scantlings, and sleepers, but the timber trade of Darrang is at present unimportant. There is one saw mill at Tezpur which converts simul into tea boxes, but hitherto very little timber has been exported from the district.

The bulk of the forest revenue is derived from the duty **Rubber.** on imported rubber, or from the price obtained for the rubber tapped in the Government plantation at Charduar. The right to tap rubber in the unclassified State forests in the district is put up to auction, and, till a few years ago, was frequently knocked down for a considerable sum. as, by custom, the purchaser was granted an exclusive monopoly of sending rubber tappers across the Inner Line into the Aka and the Dafla Hills. Experience showed that this system was liable to give rise to friction, and the issue of passes has been discontinued, the hill-men being left to tap their rubber and bring it down themselves. The Charduar rubber plantation was started in 1873, and in 1903 had cost altogether over Rs.2,17,000. Tapping was first begun on a considerable scale in 1899, and the receipts under this head in 1903 amounted to Rs.13,700. The area under rubber in that year was 2,862 acres. The tree can either be raised from seed or suckers. From June to September is the best time to sow the seed. When the seedlings are about two inches high they are transferred from the seed boxes to the nurseries. Here they are kept till the following rains, when they are moved again to well stockaded nurseries, where they are

allowed to remain for two or three years till the plant is ten feet high. They are then put out in the forest on mounds about four feet high. The young rubber tree is readily devoured by every kind of game, and so cannot be planted out till it has attained a considerable growth. When suckers are taken a strip of bark about two inches wide is removed from a healthy branch, and the place plaistered thickly over with clay, which has to be kept moist. By the end of two months roots will have been thrown out into the clay, and the branch can then be cut off and planted.

Reserved Forests more than ten square miles in area.

Name.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in sq. miles.	Date when constituted a reserve.	Name of valuable timber trees.	Route of extraction.
Balipara ...	Manza Balipara. One-half plain and one-fourth hilly containing mixed forest; one-fourth swampy covered with evergreen forest.	88	1878	Sal, nahor, ajhar, sam, gunserai, bola, makai, khakan.	Bhareli and Mansiri rivers, Tezpur-Balipara Railway.
Charduar ...	Mauzas Balipara and Bargong, swampy, plain.	121	1878	Nahor, ajhar, sam, gunserai, bola, makai, poma, gomari.	Belsiri, Mansiri, Gabharu and Dipota rivers, Tezpur-Balipara Railway.
Nowduar ...	Manza Bokola. One-half plain covered with mixed; one-half swampy covered with evergreen forest.	82	1878	Khakan, sam, poma, gunserai, makai, gomari, uriam, khair, sonaru.	Bhareli and Dikrai rivers.
Khalingduar ...	One-fourth grass land with a few khair trees, one-sixth hilly with mixed forest, one-eighth swampy, the remainder evergreen forest.	27	1878	Makai, khair, gunserai, titasapa, sida, poma, paroli and karai.	

CHAPTER V. INDUSTRIES.

Arts and industries—Silk weaving—Pottery—Brass and bellmetal—
Lac—Mat-making—Fishing.

**Tea the
only im-
portant
industry in
Darrang.**

Apart from tea the industries of Darrang are unimportant. Much of the clothing worn by the indigenous inhabitants is still woven by the women of the family, and a certain amount of lac, and of silk, especially of *eri* silk, is produced. A few foreigners express mustard oil with the bullock mill of Upper India, and there are a few blacksmiths, makers of earthenware, and metal utensils. Near Tezpur there is a sawmill under European management. In the following paragraphs is given a short account of such industries as exist

Pat silk.

Three different kinds of silk are produced in the district. The most valuable kind is known as *pat*, and is obtained from the cocoon of two species of worms, the univoltine or *bar polu* (*bombyx textor*) and the multivoltine or *saru polu* (*bombyx croesi*). Both kinds are reared indoors on the leaves of the mulberry tree (*morus indica*) or where mulberry is not obtainable, on the *panchapa*. The silk can be most easily obtained either at Becheria and Bihuguri in Tezpur, or at Sipajhar and other places in the Patharughat tahsil in Mangaldai. The eggs of the *bar polu* take ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the beginning of January.

The life of the worm lasts from thirty to forty days, and the cocoon takes about six days to spin. The cocoons are of a bright yellow colour, but the silk, when boiled in potash water, become perfectly white. From twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are required to yield one pound of thread, which is worth from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12. The thread obtained from the *saru polu* is not so valuable as that of the *bombyx textor*, but as the worm yields four broods in the year it finds greater favour with the cultivators. *Pat* silk is, however, only made to order and the total quantity produced is very small.

Several causes combine to make this silk rare and expensive. The Jugis are the only caste who will consent to rear the worm, and, as the insect is looked upon as impure, the industry is probably regarded with disfavour even by the Jugis. The supply of mulberry leaf is limited, and the worms are very delicate, a large number of them dying before they spin.

The *muga* worm (*antheraea assamensis*) is generally ~~Muga~~ fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*). Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in the Darrang district the only broods commonly reared are the *katia* in October—November, the *jarua* in December—February, and the *jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males who are allowed to remain at liberty. Each female produces about 250 eggs which are placed

in a dark place, and when the worms appear they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger. In colour it is green with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin they descend the tree and are then removed to the house. Most Assamese women possess one or more garments of *muga* silk, and well-to-do men wear waistcloths of this material on occasions of ceremony. *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use and very little is produced for sale. The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of them yielding one oz. of thread. The price obtained is from 4 to 6 annas per oz.

Eri silk.

The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. Patches of this plant are to be seen in the gardens of most villagers and the worm is proportionately common. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As with the *muga* moth, the females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who

are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread.

Eri cloth is produced in every part of the district, but the great centre of the industry is the Kachari country in the north of Mangaldai. Kalaigaon is a market at which considerable quantities of this useful commodity are on sale.

The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bar kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats. Women's clothes, both petticoats and the shawls worn over the bust, are, however, usually made of *muga* silk, the thread required for a complete dress costing from Rs. 5 to

Cost of silk
clothes.

Rs. 7. The instruments used for twisting and weaving silk are the same as those employed for cotton, but for *eri* thread a stronger reed is employed.

Weaving.

The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike, and one or more looms are to be seen in the courtyard of almost every house. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shop-keeper, is usually employed. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5'10" x 2'6", and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam," published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is from ten to fifteen rupees, and as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home-made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very little cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *gamchas* or napkins, often worn on the head,

large sheets or shawls worn as wraps, called *chadar khamin* or *bar kapor*, and smaller shawls called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called *paridia kapor* is very finely made and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200.

The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which **Pottery.** is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*) a hollow basin about 16 inches long by 3½ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*akathiah* and *khola*, *daskathia*, *charu*, and *satar*), water jars (*kalah* and *tekeli*), vessels in which rice is boiled (*tholi*), and larger vessels (*hari* and *jaka*) with lamps, pipes, and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry are at Tezpur, Chutia, Bishnath, Becheria and Haleswar, and at Salmara in Mangaldai, but there are not more than six or seven hundred persons in the district entirely supported by the potters' craft.

Brass and
bell-metal.

The brass and metal industry is not of much importance. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*helmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, and borax is then smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*, *bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi*, *gagari*), trays (*saria*), boxes to

carry betelnut and lime (*tema, temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*). The chief centres of the industry are in the Chutia tahsil, the Becheria, Modopi and Bihuguri mauzas, and the Mangaldai and Patharughat tahsils. The number of braziers is, however, very small, and of workers in bell-metal smaller still.

Lac is reared on various members of the *ficus* family **Lac.** on arhar (*cajanus Indicus*) and the castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*), but the trees most generally selected in this district are the *pakari* (*ficus rumphii*), and the poma (*cedrela toona*). As far as is known the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which the insect has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to two maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed, and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them

altogether. All the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac. The industry is not confined to any particular caste or tribe. The principal centres are Parbatia village in the Mahabhairab mauza, Bihuguri and Barjargao in mauza Haleswar, and Chapai in Barchola mauza, all of which are in the Tezpur subdivision. The bulk of the lac in Mangaldai comes from Nahara in Orang mauza, Orang, Odalguri, Kalaigaon, Paneri, Sipajhar and Barpathar. The total output of the district is said to be about 4,000 maunds per annum, and the price obtained by the villagers to range from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 per maund.

**Mats and
baskets.**

Mats and baskets are also made, but more for home use than for sale. Mats are generally made of split bamboo and are used for sleeping and sitting. The better kinds are known as *chok dhari*, while *noga dhari* are used by servants and low caste people. A better quality of mat is made by the Patias from *patidoi* (*clinogyne dichotoma*), and from the outer sheath of a plant called *tonga*. Of baskets there are numerous varieties. The basket usually suspended to the end of the bamboo *bhar* is known as *tola*. A finer variety of *tola* is known as the *dabeli bhar*, and is used at weddings and on other ceremonial occasions. The *dul* is a large bin in which grain is stored, the *jhopa* is a species of trunk made of split bamboo, and the *petera* is a similar article made of cane.

Fishing.

The fishing industry of Darrang is not of very great importance. The Doms or Nadiyals are the professional fishing caste. In 1901, there were over 9,000 of

these persons censused outside the tea gardens,* but many of them live to a great extent by agriculture, and look upon their net as a subsidiary means of livelihood. Strangely enough, even the highest castes may fish, and the element of degradation merely attaches to the selling of the catch. The right to fish in the larger rivers and *bils* is put up to auction every year, and fetches about Rs. 10,000. The purchasers of these mahals then levy a tax, generally of Rs. 6 per annum, on every person fishing in their water. The fisheries which fetch the largest sums at auction are the Brahmaputra and the Kharai *bil*. The revenue obtained from fisheries since 1900 will be found in Table XIV.

The fish are never salted, and very seldom dried, and are simply sold day by day to the people living in the neighbourhood. There is, however, a considerable export of fish from the Brahmaputra, which is carried by train on Sundays from Tezpur to the large markets near the tea gardens at Bindukuri, Barjuli, and Balipara. The best eating fish are roe (*labeo rohita*), chital (*notopterus chitala*), hilsa (*clupea ilisha*) and pithia.

The following are the nets most commonly in use. **Nets.** The *ghakata* is a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water and is generally used to catch *butchua* fish. The *pahjal* and *duitoma* are varieties of this net which have a larger mesh than the ordinary *ghakata*, and the net used to catch hilsa is of very much the same shape. The *kheuali* is a piece of net-

* This distinction is drawn as the Dom of the tea garden is generally a member of the degraded Bengal Dom caste, and is quite distinct from the Nadiyal of Assam.

ting weighted round the edge, and with a rope attached to the centre. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides together, and any fish that it may have covered are entangled in the pockets round the edge. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank. A small meshed *khewali* is called *angatha*, while those with larger meshes are known as *afalia* or *rekh*. The *uthar* is a *khewali* which is too large to be thrown by hand and is spread on the water by two men from a boat. The *langi* is a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *ohal jal* is a net of much the same kind, it is stretched across the river and allowed to drift down stream and the fish are caught by being entangled in its meshes. The *tala* or *tanajal* is another variety of the *langi*, one end of which is held by a man on the bank. The rest of the net is taken on the water in a boat and is gradually paid out in a semi-circle whose chord is the bank of the *hil* or river. The *parangi* is a square net the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout pole to which the bamboos are attached, and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. A large *parangi*, too heavy to be raised by hand, in which the pole to which the net is affixed is fastened to two stout posts, and thus works as a lever, is called *j'ntial* or *ghatjal*.

Traps.

Traps made of wicker work are also frequently employed to catch the smaller kinds of fish. The women of

the village are often to be seen walking through the shallow pools and streams during the rains, and continually dabbing down a *polo* on the mud. This *polo* resembles a huge inverted wine glass made of wicker work, with a short stem, through which any fish that may be caught are lifted out and placed in a large necked wicker work bottle tied round the fisher's waist. A smaller form of *polo* is called *juluki*. The *jakai* resembles a small bag of split bamboo, and is generally used by women. They place the mouth of the bag on the ground before them and trample up the mud and so frighten the fish into it. The *chepa* and *dingara* are traps of wicker work, the former oval, the latter shaped like a box. The fish enter through a trap door which they can push open from outside but cannot pull open from within. The *hukuma* is a hollow cone made of split bamboo, which is filled with brushwood and placed at the bottom of the river. The fish take shelter in the brushwood and are lifted out with the trap.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE, COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWNS AND LOCAL BOARDS.

Rents—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of the people—Conventional restrictions—Communications—Development of steam navigation—Railway—Roads—Navigable rivers—Post and telegraph—Commerce and trade—Markets—Transfrontier trade—Fairs—Towns—Local Boards.

Rent.

When land is sublet the rent is paid either in cash or in kind; the former system being known as *sukani* or *khandua*, the latter as *adhi*. Under the *chukti* or *guti adhi* system the tenant contracts to deliver a fixed quantity of grain irrespective of the character of the harvest, but the more usual procedure is for the tenant and the landlord to divide the crop. The following description of the different forms of *adhi* tenure is taken from a note by Mr. Basu, Assistant to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture.

“*Adhi* proper, in which the crop is divided equally between landlord and the tenant. The produce may be divided either before reaping (*guch-adhi*), in which case the standing crop is divided in the field, each party reaping his own share; or after the tenant has cut the crop (*dal-adhi*) when the bundles (*danguris*) are equally divided; or after the tenant has cut and threshed the crop (*guri-adhi*, called also *guti-adhi* in Lower Assam) when the grain is divided. All work prior to the act of division and expenses incidental thereto are borne by the tenant. The seed grain alone is, as a rule, found by both parties in equal shares, and if one party has advanced it in the beginning, one bundle (*danguri*) of paddy per *bigha* is deducted from the whole

in payment of the advance, and the remainder is then divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. There is still another kind of division in which the tenant undertakes to cultivate the land up to the stage of the puddle (*boka-adhi*), when the land is divided in equal parts, each party transplanting his share with his own seedlings and at his own cost.

"In every form of *adhi* the Government dues are paid by the landlord. As a rule, it is only good productive lands which can be let on *adhi* tenure, particularly on the *chukti* and *guri* forms of the tenure. In *adhi* tenure, no extra payments are called for. Cash paying tenants, however, are often called upon to pay various perquisites which go to swell the nominal rent dues. The most common is gratuitous labour for a certain number of days in the year. This is ordinarily the case with all tenants holding temple lands. Not unfrequently the rent is partly, and, in some cases, wholly remitted in consideration of labour to hereditary tenants who are descendants of former *paiks* attached to the temple."

Statistics of subtenancy were compiled in 1899-1900 and are summarized in the following abstract :—

Name of Subdivision.			Total settled area for which returns compiled.	Total area sublet.	Area pay- ing pro- duce rents.	Area pay- ing cash rent.
			Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Tezpur	...	...	78,806	2,471	90	2,381
Mangaldai	...	...	180,580	19,839	2,073	17,766
Total ...			259,386	22,310	2,163	20,147

It will be seen that only 3 per cent of the settled area in Tezpur for which statistics were compiled, and 11 per cent of the corresponding area in Mangaldai were occupied by tenants. The existence of a considerable number of tenants in the latter subdivision is due to the fact that the estates of the Darrang Raja's family are situated in this locality. In Tezpur tenants are often

garden coolies who rent land from the Assamese in the neighbourhood of the plantations. Only one-eleventh of the total area sublet was held on *adhi* terms. The cash rents charged do not, as a rule, exceed the Government revenue demand. According to the census the number of cultivating tenants, both workers and dependants, in Darrang was 8,314 in 1891 and 16,468 in 1901.

Wages.

There is really no such thing as a landless labouring class in Darrang, and in 1891 only 1,124 persons were returned as supported by general labour.* Kacharis will, however, work on tea gardens for five or six months at a time, and ex-garden coolies, who have settled in the villages, will occasionally work on the plantations. Since 1897 labourers have come in greater numbers from Kamrup, but, in spite of this, nearly all the revenue officers complain of the difficulty of obtaining labour. The normal daily wage is 4 or 5 annas in Mangaldai, and 6 annas in Tezpur. Servants are generally fed, and receive 5 or 6 rupees per mensem as wages. In Mangaldai it is the practice to give a servant an advance, which is gradually worked off.

Artisans' wages.

Carpenters and masons are said to get from twelve annas to one rupee and blacksmiths one rupee to one rupee eight annas a day. The number of these artisans is, however, quite insignificant, and in quoting a rate of wages for the district it must always be borne in mind

* The figures for 1891 are given, as in that year all persons who combined general labour with agriculture were shown under the former head. In 1901, persons whose principal occupation was agriculture were shown as cultivators. Had the 1891 system been in force, the number of general labourers would only have been about 300 more than at the previous census.

that labourers cannot as a rule be obtained at all except through the intervention of some individual possessed of local influence.

The prices of rice, matikalai, and salt in February and August will be found in Table X. In 1835, Lieutenant Mathie reported that rice sold for 12 annas a maund, but since 1880 there does not seem to have been any very material rise of prices. They vary very largely in accordance with the character of the harvest, and rice is naturally much dearer in August than it is in February. Prices, too, are much lower in Mangaldai, where there is a comparatively small garden population, than they are in the markets near Tezpur. Salt is considerably cheaper since the reduction of the duty in 1904. **Prices.**

The staple food of the people is boiled rice eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi*, which is not very largely used. Goat's flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, and is frequently procurable, especially in times of flood, when the deer are driven into islets of higher land and are ruthlessly slaughtered from boats. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and *ghi*. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhoti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper, and sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a scarf tied round the bust, **Food and dress.**

and a shawl. Amongst the Assamese these cloths are generally home made, and in the case of the women, and of the large wraps used in the cold weather by men, are not unfrequently of silk. Foreign men generally wear coats and *dhotis* of Manchester cotton, and the women cheap but gaudy *saris* of the same material. Men and women alike generally go bareheaded, but the former sometimes twist a handkerchief round their heads, and on sunny or rainy days both sexes have recourse to the broad brimmed *jhapi*. The *jhapi* serves as a protection against the sun and rain, and is made of leaves and split bamboo, and decorated with coloured cloth. These hats are circular in shape, and range from two to four feet in diameter, but those of the larger size are more often carried than worn. Boots and shoes are the exception, and in their own homes even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp pointed grass.

Dwellings.

The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses, almost huts, and in a corner there are generally two open sheds, one of which contains a loom while the other serves the purpose of a cow-house. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca-nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum

family covering the ground. The general effect is extremely picturesque, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the homestead very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back there is generally a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated and must be very hot in summer. They are built on low mud plinths, and are thus extremely damp. The walls are made of reeds plastered over with mud, or of split bamboo, the roof of thatch, the rafters and posts of bamboo. All of these materials can, as a rule, be obtained free of charge, and a house costs the owner nothing but the trouble of erecting it, but in spite of this they are small and badly built. The houses of the middle class are built on practically the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the cultivating classes is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell-metal utensils, and bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old cloths, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses, but these articles of luxury are seldom found outside the town.

There are no rich men amongst the Assamese in Darang, and very few who are even moderately well-to-do, but the explanation of this fact is not far to seek. The Assamese is a cultivator and nothing more, and with wholesale trade, crafts, and industries, he has little or

**Economic
condition of
the people.**

no concern. There are few capitalists who have the means to enable them to farm upon a large scale, and even were the money forthcoming, it would be very difficult to obtain the necessary labour. Outside the tea gardens the immense mass of the people are small peasant proprietors, who drive the plough themselves, and carry home the rice that has been cut by their wives and daughters. Such a community can never become rich, but it is well removed above the line of poverty, and it is seldom that any villager in Darrang goes hungry to his bed.

Most of the revenue officers consulted are of opinion that a considerable proportion of the villagers are in debt, but it is difficult to believe that indebtedness can have assumed serious proportions, though a certain amount of petty borrowing no doubt goes on. The rates of interest charged vary from two pice to one anna in the rupee per mensem for small loans for short periods, but loans for larger sums can be obtained at lower rates. The tea industry puts an immense amount of money into circulation, and no less than Rs. 26,44,000 were paid away in wages in 1903-04. Much of this finds its way no doubt into the pockets of the *kaiya*, but, even assuming that each adult cooly only spends Rs. 2 per mensem on rice, poultry, and vegetables purchased from the villagers, this would amount to over Rs. 11,50,000 in the year,* or more than the total revenue raised in the district from land revenue, cesses, and all heads of excise. The *raiya*t are said to obtain the cash required to pay their revenue

* There were 48,487 adult coolies in Darrang on June 30th, 1903.

and buy their little luxuries, by the sale of rice, vegetables, and poultry, for which they have a market at their very doors.

The mustard crop which is generally grown for sale is usually worth nearly three lakhs of rupees to the raiyats.* The Kacharis seldom grow much rice for sale, as they consume enormous quantities in beer, and many of them earn the cash they need by the sale of *eri* cloths, or by hollowing out canoes, or by working on the tea gardens. Tea garden work, though well paid, is irksome, and, as it entails an absence from home for several months, is not very generally resorted to.† In 1901, little more than one-tenth of the Kacharis of Darrang were censused on the plantations, and only a few hundreds had gone to districts further up the valley.

The people of Darrang do not seem to be hampered by many conventional restrictions. All castes, except the Brahman, rear the *eri* silk worm, but the cultivation of *pat* is restricted to the Katanis. All castes again catch fish, but only the Nadiyals, Kacharis, Rabhas, and Muhammadans will sell it. Very few people plough on the *ekudasi* (eleventh day of the waxing or waning moon), *purnima* (the full moon), *amabasya* (new moon), and the *sankranti* (last day of the month). The Assamese abstain from work during the *bihus*, and on the occasion of the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb. Pulse (*mah*) is not sown on days beginning with an m, or mustard (*shoriya*) on days beginning with an sh. The

* Assuming that they get Rs. 3-4 per maund.

† Kacharis will not generally take service on tea gardens unless they are given the opportunity of earning "doubles."

following quaint prejudices against certain days, reported from the Kalaigaon tahsil, are found to a greater or less degree in most parts of the district Monday—loans not given, *sali* dhan not sold; Tuesday—*ahu* and *sali* dhan not sold, shaving, and cutting of bamboos prohibited; Thursday—loans not given, shaving prohibited; Saturday—*ahu* dhan not sold, shaving, and cutting of bamboos prohibited. In some parts of the district certain days are considered particularly inauspicious for the payment of the land revenue. In Chutia, for instance, the raiyats avoid Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays; in Barchola, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Saturdays; and in Behali, Mondays and Saturdays.

Communi-
cations.
Early dif-
culties.

At the time when the British came into possession of Assam, the difficulty of communications proved a most serious obstacle to the development of the Province. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business.

McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days and Bishnath in three days more.*

Few people presumably had sufficient time or patience to undertake the voyage at that season of the

* McCosh's Topography of Assam, p. 82. Butler, in his Sketch of Assam, puts the journey from Calcutta to Saikhoa in a badgerow *via* Dacca at over nine weeks even in the cold weather.

year. Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his tedious way, his view bounded as a rule by high banks of treacherous sand, which then as now were continually being undermined by the current and falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot, and the tedium of this dreary voyage must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort.

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the valley, but in 1848 the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the valley to Dibrugarh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure, but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made with results that were not unsatisfactory even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to

Beginning
of steam
navigation.

Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary contrast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a country boat. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers, and in 1855 Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins complained that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand the accommodation was designed on an extremely liberal scale. The regulations issued in 1851 expressly authorized passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases, a proviso which suggests a very deliberate voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seems to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati, but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but in

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1857.

spite of this it showed a fair profit, and it was evident that there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

In 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks provided that the Government boats were taken from the line, and, since that date, the steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company with whom they are associated. But, in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs, and in a letter to Government openly gave expression to the opinion that it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter he drew the following dreary picture of the isolation of Assam :—

“With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for a wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagnation, and torpidity and a terrible sense of isolation,

Private
steamers put
on the river.

by which enterprise is chilled and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles ; nor, on the other hand, is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him."

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884 a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur. Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached.

The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat, and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that, and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed, which, in comparison with that attained by the large cargo boats, was most

commendable. During the rains Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri, while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation of the river is not entirely free from difficulty, the companies were not incited to further efforts by competition, and some years elapsed before any attempt was made to reduce the duration of the voyage. On the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway the companies realized that it was necessary to accelerate their timing if they were to retain their traffic, and steamers now reach Dibrugarh on the fourth day from Dhubri, while the voyage from Dibrugarh to Goalundo only occupies three days.

The ports at which the steamers call in Darrang are Rangamati for Mangaldai, Singri, Tezpur, Bishnath, Behalimukh and Gamirighat.

The only railway, in the district is a small line on the **Railway.** 2' 6" inch gauge which was constructed in 1896 by a private company. It runs from Tezpur, past Dekargaon, Bindukuri, Sessa, Thakurbari and Rangapara to Bali-para, 20 miles away. From Rangapara there is a branch line to Barjuli. It was primarily constructed to afford an outlet to the tea manufactured on the prosperous estates through which it passes, and cost altogether Rs. 4,87,000. It is a well-managed little line, and in 1903 paid a dividend of 5 per cent.

The north trunk road enters the district at the point **Roads,** where it crosses the Barnadi, and runs right through it, a distance of 151 miles. The following is the list of marching stages; the figure in brackets shows the dis-

tance which each stage is from the next stage to the west : Mangaldai (16 miles), Dalgaon (14 miles), Orang ($14\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Dekhiajuli ($8\frac{3}{4}$ miles), Gabharu (10 miles), Dipota ($6\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Tezpur ($6\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Jamaguri (12 miles), Chutia ($7\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Burigaon ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Behali ($10\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Helem ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Gohpur ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Kalabari ($7\frac{1}{2}$ miles). At each of these stages there is an inspection bungalow furnished with chairs, tables, and bedsteads. Bed clothes and mattresses, kitchen utensils and crockery must be provided by the traveller.

There are altogether 420 miles of road kept up by the Local Boards of the district. These roads are shown on the map appended to this volume, but the system is too complicated to admit of its being properly described in detail. The most important roads are the road that runs due north from Tezpur to Balipara, the road east of the Bhareli that runs parallel to but north of the trunk road as far as Behali, and the roads that run from the Brahmaputra to the north of Mangaldai. In Tezpur there are inspection bungalows at Goroimari and Balipara, on the 5th and 14th mile of the Tezpur-Balipara road. In Mangaldai there are bungalows at Kalaigaon, Nalbari, Odalguri, Bengbari, Shekhar, Silaikuchi, Patharughat, and Chinakona. Most of the minor streams are spanned by timber bridges, but the traveller in Darrang is still often delayed by ferries. Even on the trunk road the following rivers are unbridged: the Barnadi, the Dhansiri, the Rowta, the Pachnai, the Gabharu, the Bhareli, the Bargang, and the Burai. In the dry weather the only rivers which are not fordable are the Barnadi, the Dhan-

siri, and the Bhareli, but in the rains all of them have to be crossed on ferry mars. These mars are formed by fastening two canoes, or two iron cylinders together, and building a timber platform on the top. These floating platforms are very steady and any animal, short of an elephant, can be crossed on them. Generally speaking, the district is well supplied with the means of communication. The Brahmaputra is the great highway of commerce, and all that is required is a sufficient number of branch roads to connect it with the interior. East of Tezpur the trunk road, running as it does parallel to the river, carries little traffic. None of the roads are metalled, and they are, in consequence, much cut up if largely used for carting in the rains. In proportion to its population there is no district in the Province where carts are as numerous as in Darrang. In 1899, there were 3,500 of them, or four times the number found in the neighbouring district of Kamrup. Buffaloes are largely used as draught animals, especially in Mangaldai.

Apart from the Brahmaputra, the rivers of the district are not much used for purposes of commerce. In the cold weather there is often little water in the channel; in the rains the current is generally too swift. They have, moreover, an uncomfortable way of changing their courses and overflowing their banks, a habit which tends to prevent the growth of villages in the immediate neighbourhood. In the rains a certain amount of traffic goes up the Dipota to Bindukuri, and up the Ghiladari and Marnai; in the cold weather these rivers are not navigable for boats of four tons burthen. A vessel of that size can proceed up

**Navigable
rivers.**

the Bhareli as far as Balipara in the cold weather, and up to Namiri in the rains, but, as this river flows most of its course through jungle, it carries little traffic. The Nanai and the Barnadi in Mangaldai are used to some extent as trade routes, and in the rains a large boat can proceed up the latter river, as far as Malmuraghat, though in the cold weather it cannot generally get above Sonarikhat.

**Post and
Telegraph.**

The following statement shows what an enormous development there has been of postal business in Darang since 1876 :—

Number of post offices in		Number of letters and post-cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank account in		Balance at the credit of the depositors	
1875-76.	1903-04.	*1861-62.	1870-71.	190-304.	1871-72.	1903-04.	1871-72.	1903-04
2	22	1	33	428	29	1,345	Rs. 2,900	Rs. 2,81,323

There were 22 post offices in 1904 against 2 in 1876, while the number of letters and postcards delivered in the former year is thirteen times the number handled in 1871. The savings bank has also made most satisfactory progress, and considering the low rate of interest given, and the scarcity of capital in the district, the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures for 1872 were returned after the bank had only been open for a few months, but even then, on general grounds, the local officers were inclined to think that the experiment would prove a failure.

* According to the statistical account of Assam, Vol. I, p. 159, only 1,386 letters etc., were received, and 1,034 despatched from the district in 1861-62.

The mail is carried to Darrang by steamer, and is distributed by runners throughout the district, except in the case of post offices along the Tezpur-Balipara Railway, which are served by rail. Statement B in the Appendix shows the places at which post and telegraph offices are situated.

The trade of Darrang is not of very much importance. **Commerce and Trade.** External trade is carried on almost entirely with Calcutta, and most of it enters and leaves the district by steamers. The principal exports are tea, mustard seed, rubber, hides, and canes, while the articles received in exchange are rice, gram, and other grains, kerosine and other oils, piece goods, machinery, hardware, and salt. Apart from tea nearly all the export and import trade is in the hands of the Marwari merchants, locally known as *kaiyas*, who are the great shopkeepers and money-lenders of the Assam Valley. They purchase their surplus products from the raiyats, and supply them in return with cloth, thread, salt, oil, and, very often, opium. Tezpur is the principal trading centre of the district, and after Tezpur, but *longo intervallo*, comes Mangaldai. In these two places there are a certain number of Muhammadan shopkeepers from Eastern Bengal, who deal in general haberdashery and oilman's stores. A list of the villages in which there are three or more permanent shops will be found in the Appendix. Each tea garden is also a small centre of trade, and on every estate there are one or two *kaiyas* shops.

Retail business is to a great extent transacted at weekly **Markets.** markets, which are generally held in the vicinity of the

larger tea gardens. The articles offered for sale include rice and other grain, fruit and country vegetables, poultry, earthenware and metal vessels, oil, molasses, tobacco, and cotton cloth. Two of the largest markets are those at Amaribari and Bindukuri, which, like most of these bazars, are held upon a Sunday. On the previous day lines of carts are to be seen coming in from the direction of Orang, laden with poultry, rice, and other rural produce. Special trains are run from Tezpur to serve these *hats*, and are crowded with shopkeepers and their wares. Other considerable markets are those at Barjuli, at Paneri and Kalaigaon in Mangaldai, and at Chutia east of the Bhareli. A list of the places where markets are held will be found in the Appendix (Statement D).

Transfrontier Trade. Transfrontier trade is carried on at the fairs held at Odalguri, and Ghagrapara; and starting from these centres the Bhutias spread over the country. The principal imports are blankets, cattle, sheep, small shaggy ponies, wax, and musk; the chief exports are cotton twist and piece goods, rice, and silk cloth.

The Bhutias at one time did a considerable trade in salt at Odalguri, as they bartered it for rice with the villagers, at rates which were very favourable to themselves. The improvement in communications, and the opening of large and flourishing plantations near Tezpur, produced a marked change in the relative value of these two commodities. Liverpool salt became more accessible in the Kachari mauzas, and traders from Tezpur who came with their carts to make purchases at Odalguri and Orang sent up the price of rice. At one time the

Kacharis willingly gave 15 seers of rice for one of salt, but, as the price of rice began to rise, the villagers complained of the exactions of the Bhutias, and at the durbar of 1886 the rate of exchange was fixed at 8 to 1. This rate was certainly high, but it was not high enough for the Bhutias, and in the winter of 1888-89 they created some annoyance by leaving salt at the houses of the people, when the men were at work in the fields, and then demanding 12 or 15 times its weight in rice. The matter was promptly settled by the Deputy Commissioner, who refused to pay the *posa* to the Gelengs, until they had signed an agreement, in which it was provided that the rate of exchange should be 4 to 1. At this rate the export of salt is not very remunerative to the Bhutias, and there has in consequence been some falling off in trade at the Odalguri fair. Rubber is also imported from the Dafia and Aka Hills, but is generally taken direct to the kaiyas' shops.

In the Mangaldai subdivision fairs are held on the occasion of the Baisakh Bihu, which are attended by considerable numbers of villagers. A list of the places where the principal fairs are held will be found in Statement E. in the Appendix. Fairs.

Tezpur is the only place in the district which has the smallest title to the name of town. It has already been suggested (page 22) that it is probably identical with Durjaya, the capital of the Pala kings, and, if this assumption is correct, it must once have been a place of very considerable importance. The existence of the magnificent temple ruins on the Bamuni hills, and the Tezpur town.

massive pieces of carved stone which are found lying about the station, clearly show that it was once the seat of a civilized and powerful prince. But it was never the capital either of the Koch or Ahom kings, and at the time when we came into possession of the district it was nothing more than a small, unhealthy village. Even in 1872, it only had a population of 1,877 persons. Since that date it has grown with some rapidity, and the figures for the three last enumerations were—1881, 2,910 ; 1891, 4,011 ; and 1901, 5,047.

Tezpur is situated on the right bank of the Brahmaputra in $26^{\circ}37'$ N. and $92^{\circ}47'$ E. The north trunk road passes through the town, it is a port of call for river steamers, and a railway connects it with the country to the north. The houses of the European residents are built on low hills along the river bank, from which a magnificent view is to be obtained on a clear day of the Himalayan snows. Behind these hills there is a green maidan, dotted over with magnificent umbrageous trees and tastefully laid out with plants and flowering shrubs. The native and business quarter is situated at the back.

The town was constituted a municipality under Act V (B. C.) of 1876 in 1893. The municipal committee is composed of ten members, eight of whom are nominated by the Chief Commissioner, while the Deputy Commissioner, who acts as chairman, and the Civil Surgeon, are *ex-officio* members of the board. A tax is levied at the rate of 5 per cent on the annual value of holdings, which had an incidence of 6 annas 4 pie per head of population in 1903-04. From Table XVIII it will be seen that the

proportion of revenue raised by direct taxation is very small. Drinking water is obtained either from the Brahmaputra or from four excellent masonry wells. Nine miles of metalled and six miles of unmetalled road are maintained by the municipality.

Mangaldai is a village, which in 1901 had only 711 ^{Mangaldai.} inhabitants, but it is the headquarters of the subdivision, and contains the residence of the Subdivisional Officer. The public buildings include the magistrate's court, a small jail, a police station, and a dispensary. There is a small bazar, but the trade is not of much importance. The village is situated on the left bank of the Mangaldai river and immediately to the south there is a large *chapori*, or wide stretch of marshy country, reaching to the Brahmaputra.

In the early days of British administration there ^{Local} was little money available for public works of any kind, ^{Boards.} and what there was was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then

started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day. The Deputy Commissioner is chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, but the Mangaldai board is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, except a few main lines of communication, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879 at the rate of one anna per rupee on

the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVII. The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Native system—Early settlements—The settlement of 1893—The growth of land revenue—Town lands—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Settlement staff—Land tenures—Collection of land revenue—Tahsildari and mauzadari system—Area of unsettled waste—System of excise—Opium—Country spirit—Laopani—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Administration of justice—Registration—Volunteering—Police—Jails—Education—Medical aspects—Lunatic asylum—Surveys.

**Land
revenue:
Native
system.**

The revenue system in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the state, and while so employed was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas** of *rupit* land, and the land, occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount was assessed at Re.0-4-0 a *bigha*. In addition to this the villagers paid a hearth tax of one rupee for each party cooking separately.

Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809, states that each pargana was let for a term of years to a Chaudri, who

* One acre=3·025 bighas.

made what profit he could out of land held in excess of the *paiks*' free grants. The Chaudris are said to have retained for their own use three-fifths of the gross collections, and to have treated the raiyats in a very oppressive manner. The nominal rent per plough of land in Kamrup was Rs. 2, but the exactions of the Chaudri raised it to Rs. 5 or Rs. 7. The yield of a plough was said to be 79 maunds of "rough rice" and 16 maunds of mustard seed, and as estimates of yield prior to the era of crop experiments were generally too high, the area of a plough was probably between four and five acres, and the rates exacted by the Chaudri must at that time have seemed oppressive. These remarks have been quoted as in all probability the system prevailing in Darrang was not dissimilar from that existing in Kamrup.

North of the Brahmaputra, the whole of the profits of agriculture were, according to the same authority, absorbed by the Government or the hill tribes, each power sending a force, which took as much as possible from the cultivators. On the occupation of the country by the British, the system of compulsory labour was abolished and the *paik* land was assessed to revenue. The rates varied slightly from time to time, but prior to 1865 did not exceed 6 annas per *bigha* for *rupit* and 4 annas 6 pie for other kinds of land. In that year the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, proposed to discriminate between *basti* or garden and other land and to raise the *bigha* rates to Re. 1 for *basti*, 10 annas for *rupit*, and 8 annas for other land. No detailed enquiries were made, there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the

Early
settlements
and
settlement
of 1868-69.

three different classes of land, there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class or even between district and district. The revised rates were, however, so moderate that it was never seriously contended that they would have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson was of opinion that the existing assessment was ridiculously low, and in support of his opinion pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about 4 lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days represented a difference of about 40 per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the enormous enhancement the revenue was collected without difficulty.

**The
settlement
of 1893-94.**

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold division of land was retained, but instead of imposing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were divided into four grades and the rates assessed varied with the grade of the village.* The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined

* The following were the rates assessed per *bigha* :—

Class.			Basti.	Rupit.	Faringati
			Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.
1st	...	...	1 6	1 0	0 12 per <i>bigha</i> .
2nd	...	...	1 4	0 14	0 10 "
3rd	...	...	1 2	0 12	0 9 "
4th	..	...	1 0	0 10	0 8 "

by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by subtenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff, within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based was that the worst lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities.

The following statement shows the gradual expansion of the land revenue and the settled area since the

**Growth of
the land
revenue,**

district first came under our administration :—

A. D.	Rs.	Acres.
1834-35	1,07,392	107,788
1852-53	1,79,578	221,849
1865-66	1,94,846	193,465
1868-69	3,57,768	<i>not available.</i>
1892-93	4,96,692	370,933
1893-94	6,48,820	372,399
1902-03	7,23,876	426,827

The figures for years in which a new settlement was introduced are printed in italics.

**Town
lands.**

Tezpur town was resettled for thirty years with effect from April 1899. The highest rates assessed per acre of trade sites were Rs. 30 rising to Rs. 45 in the eleventh year; and for each acre of residential land Rs. 18 rising to Rs. 24. Under the rules now in force waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual letting value of the site. The lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner thinks fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. Land in Mangaldai village is assessed at the rate of Rs. 2 per *bigha*.

**Established
and fluctu-
ating culti-
vation.**

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy, land is not readily resigned, and frequently possesses a considerable market value. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice (*ahu*), and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The fluctuating area is found near the Brahmaputra, and more especially at the western end of the district.

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic leases. The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorize the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognized. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either form of lease or any individual field within the holding can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Collector.

The basis of the land revenue system is the **mandal** ^{**Th. Mandal.**} the village accountant and surveyor, who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per mensem. In March, he proceeds to his circle, inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *dagchitha*, in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *jamabandi* or rent roll, which classifies the fields by holdings and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot weather he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases.

When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops, he assists in the collection of the revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land. In most Provinces in India a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can be resigned, and there is not as a rule any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. The state of affairs in Darrang is very different. In 1902-03 the total settled area was 426,827 acres, the area excluded from settlement was 17,211 acres, and the area of land included 27,639 acres. It must not, however, be supposed that this kaleidoscopic shifting of the fields is taking place in every portion of the district, and that everywhere may be seen the spectacle of cultivated land becoming jungle and jungle land changing into fields of waving rice. In the established portion land is seldom given up, but in the fluctuating area, as has been already explained, it is less trouble to burn the jungle and break up new land every second or third year, than to clean the fields of the weeds which spring up after they have been two or three times cropped.

**Superior
settlement
staff.**

Above the mandal comes the supervisor kanungo, a peripatetic officer on pay ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 who checks his work both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy

collectors and draw salaries ranging from Rs.100 to Rs.200 per mensem. The appointments are usually made by selection from candidates, who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must either have taken a university degree or have read up to that standard.

The total sanctioned staff for the Darrang district is two sub-deputy collectors, excluding those employed as tahsildars, eight supervisor kanungoes, and 146 mandals.

The different tenures in the district fall under two main classes (1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and (2) those under which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, but there are also considerable areas of revenue free (*lakhiraj*) land and land settled at half rates (*nisfi-khiraj*). In the time of the Ahom kings the whole of this land is said to have been held rent free, but in 1834 the Government of India ruled that "all rights to hold lands free of assessment founded on grants made by any former Government must be considered to have been cancelled by the British conquest. All claims therefore for restoration to such tenures can rest only on the indulgence of Government without any right." Mr. David Scott, the first British Commissioner of Assam,

**Land Ten-
ures.**

found that, even under the Ahom Rajas, these revenue free lands had been assessed at the rate of five annas a *pura*,* and he imposed this cess, which was subsequently raised to eight annas, upon them. The Government of India then directed that an enquiry should be instituted into these claims, and that all cases in which land was held on *bonâ fide* grants dating from before the time of the Burmese conquest, or on account of services which were still performed, should be reported to them for orders. These instructions were not fully observed by the Commissioner of that time, Captain (subsequently General) Jenkins. This officer, for reasons which have never been ascertained, drew a broad distinction between *debottar* or temple lands and *brahmottar* and *dharmottar* lands, *i. e.*, lands which were devoted to some religious purpose but were not actually the property of a temple. The former he released from all claims for revenue, on the latter he imposed the rate assessed by Mr. Scott, which happened to be half the full rates prevailing at the time. No report was submitted to the Government of India and no final orders were ever received from them, but the right of the former class of proprietors to hold free of revenue, and of the latter at half the usual rates, has been definitely recognised. Waste land included within the boundaries of *nisfi-khiraj* estates is at present assessed at 1 anna 3 pies per *bigha*, and as the proportion of uncultivated land in these estates is fairly high, this assessment adds considerably to the gross demand. The total area of *lakhiraj* land in the district in 1903-04 was 5,071

* A *pura* = 4 *bighas*, 3·025 *bighas*=1 acre.

acres and of *nisfi-khiraj* land 31,058 acres. The area settled year by year at full rates is shown in the appendix.

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1862. The underlying principle in each case was that the land should be held on long leases, at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions. Between 1862 and 1876, the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs.2-8-0 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854 were allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there is no longer in the district any land held under the rules of 1838 and only 293 acres under the rules of 1854, while there are 52,197 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for though it is nominally put up to auction there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For two years the grant remains revenue free, and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh, and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules will be found in Table XV in the appendix.

**Grant of
land for the
cultivation
of special
crops.**

**Collection
of land re-
venue.**

The collection of ordinary land revenue was first introduced in Darrang in 1833. The lands in each village were measured up by an amin, leases were issued to the raiyats, and an officer, called the *patghiri*, was made responsible for the collection of the revenue. In 1841-42, a new experiment was tried. Settlement was made with the *patghiri* for a term of years, and he was held responsible for any losses that might occur, but was allowed to absorb any profits that accrued from the extension of cultivation. This system proved, however, to be unsatisfactory, and was abandoned, and recourse was again had to the annual settlement, under which the fiscal officer was only responsible for the collection of the revenue. The experiment was also tried of farming out the *chapor*i mahals to the highest bidder, but it was found that the cultivators were oppressed, and their holdings were accordingly settled with them direct. The cost of collection was, however, heavy. The *patghiri* or fiscal officer, received as remuneration 10 per cent of the collections, and was assisted by a *kakati*, who received 5 per cent. To this must be added the cost of a considerable number of chaukidars, each of whom received 16 *bighas* of rent free land.*

**Larger
mauzas and
tahsils.**

In 1853, there were no less than 149 mauzas in Darrang, containing on an average 14 villages with a revenue of Rs. 1,215. The general tendency since that date has been to increase the size of the unit of collection. In 1867, the mauzadars, as the collecting officers

*See Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Darrang, para. 28, Calcutta, 1854.

were called, received 15 per cent of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later their commission was reduced to 10 per cent, and in 1872 the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent could only be drawn on the first Rs.6,000 of revenue, 5 per cent being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, the idea gained ground that Government would do better by putting the mauzadar aside and employing salaried officials as a collecting agency. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary, and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him. The first tahsil was opened at Tezpur in 1884. Then, in 1886, came Hindughopa, subsequently transferred to Patharughat; Kalaigaon in 1888; and Mangaldai in 1892. These three tahsils are all situated in the southern and central part of the Mangaldai subdivision. The last tahsil to be opened was the one at Chutia, east of the Bhareli, in 1893. This arrangement left about 30 per cent of the land revenue demand to be collected by mauzadars.

The tahsildari system is cheaper than that of collection through mauzadars, the cost in one case being about 5 per cent, in the other 7 per cent of the gross amount realized. Serious difficulties are, however, experienced in dealing direct with such a large body of raiyats, and there is no doubt that the tahsil system

Comparative advantages of tahsildars and mauzadars.

is not as popular with the people as the one which it replaced. A mauzadar of experience knows whether delay in payment is due to shortness of funds or to recalcitrancy; he knows the time which is most convenient for payment in individual cases, and as he is not bound by the *kist* dates his collection admits of an elasticity which no Government rules can establish. It has the further advantage of providing a body of representative men, who, while regarded by the people as their leaders, are bound to the Government by the facts of their position. It has accordingly been decided to try the experiment of gradually breaking up the tahsils and substituting in their place mauzadars, who will be entrusted with the duty of collecting from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 of revenue.

Compulsory realization of revenue.

The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments, three-fifths on January 15th, and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the Government demand from the sale of mustard and pulse, when it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement is also due in one instalment on that date. In 1903-04, notice of demand* was issued on account of 10 per cent of the total land revenue demand, but it was only necessary to attach property on account of 2 per cent of the demand. The number of cases in which it was necessary to have recourse to sale was very small, and the revenue on

* The Deputy Commissioner has since been authorized to dispense with the notice of demand in those cases in which he considers it advisable to do so and to proceed at once to the attachment of the property of the defaulter.

account of which property was sold only represented 0·1 per cent of the total demand.

The figures in the margin show the total area of the district as reported by the Assistant Surveyor-General, Calcutta, the settled area and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03, and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year. No less than 71 per cent of the total area of the district falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this area is fit for cultivation or human habitation. The figures include the area of roads, and of tracts that are permanently under water, which in Darrang with its networks of rivers draining into the mighty Brahmaputra amounts to a very considerable total. It also includes the area of marshes which are submerged during the rainy season, and are hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It is useless to attempt to form any estimate of the proportion of the unsettled area in which cultivation could be carried on with profit, and it is hardly necessary to do so, as it is obvious that the district could support a very much larger population than it now possesses.

The unsettled area in each tahsil and mauza is still enormous. Details will be found in Table XV A

More than three-fourths of the excise revenue of Darrang is usually obtained from opium. Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the

	Square miles.
Total area of the district	3,418
Settled area	667
Area of reserved forests	321
Area of waste land	2,430

Area of
unsettled
waste.

System of
excise ;
Opium.

poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable, and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited; and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular *mahal* was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold, as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74, there were in the district 856 shops for the retail vend of opium; thirty years later there were only 100.

**Consump-
tion.**

The following figures for consumption show the extent to which the use of opium has been affected by the raising of the duty: 1873-74, 237 maunds; 1879-80, 275 maunds; 1889-90, 207 maunds; 1899-1900, 179 maunds. 1879-80 shows a large increase over the figures of 1873-74, but some exceptional cause was apparently in operation in the latter year as the average annual consumption between 1875 and 1880 was only 248 maunds.

The quantity of opium issued in 1899-1900 was 28 per cent less than this average of 20 years before. This decrease is probably due to a reduction in the number of shops, to an increase in the rate of duty by 13 rupees a seer, and to the fact that the price of opium is now so high that non-consumers have a very distinct inducement to abstain from taking to such an expensive habit.

In 1835, the retail price of opium was reported by the Collector, Mr. Mathie, to be Rs. 5 per seer. Since 1890, it has ranged from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a seer, and it is obvious that such an enormous increase in the price must have a very perceptible effect upon consumption.

About three-fifths of the total quantity of opium taken by the district is consumed in Mangaldai, where the drug is much in favour amongst the Kachari population.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed.

The outstill system is still in force in the district, that is to say, the right to manufacture and sell spirit at

Way in
which
opium is
taken.

Country
spirit.

a particular locality is put up to auction, and no attempt is made to levy duty on the actual quantity of spirit distilled. The abstract in the margin shows that during the last twenty years of the century there was a considerable increase in the revenue derived from country spirits.

Year.	Number of shops.	Revenue. Rs.
1873-74	11	1,457
1879-80	18	6,887
1889-90	21	19,094
1899-1900	15	48,327

Between 1881 and 1901, the foreign population of the district, and it is the foreigners who consume the bulk of the country spirit sold, increased four and a half fold. In spite of this, the facilities for obtaining liquor were very considerably reduced. The revenue realized depends upon the amount of competition when the shops are put up to auction. In a sparsely populated district like Darrang there were few representatives of the liquor trading classes, and the vendors were thus enabled to absorb an unduly large proportion of the profits. Towards the end of the century efforts were made to ensure that the liquor vendors should pay a substantial sum for their licenses, though the number of shops was reduced by 29 per cent.

The attention of the administration has been more than once directed to the discovery of the most effective means of discouraging a taste for drinking, but one of the most serious obstacles to improvement lies in the fact that if the supply of licensed liquor is cut off, rice beer and spirit can be readily manufactured by the people. Complaints have been received of excessive drunkenness on tea gardens, which were situated far

beyond the reach of any licensed liquor shop. The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, but owing to the difficulty of communications, and the facilities that exist for the manufacture of illicit liquor, it has not yet been found possible to introduce any more satisfactory method in its place. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing as far as possible the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still. The liquor shops which do the largest business are situated at Bindukuri, Balipara, Tezpur, Harka, and Sakomati.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort, which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthen ware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and as it boils rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and

**Country
spirit. The
still.**

retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers, where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

**Material
employed.**

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*) which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed : mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers ; or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers ; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots, and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still. The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three-quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa, the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact

proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phu* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation as if the *thul* or *phu* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

Laopani or rice beer is the national drink of the uncon- **Laopani.** verted tribes, and a special name, *mo-lahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed: The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are

5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to some 8 or 10 quarts of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by a simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Ganja.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Assam, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. Ganja is not much used except by foreigners, and from Table XVI it will be seen that the revenue raised from this drug is comparatively small, and that most of it is obtained from the *sadr* subdivision. It is imported from Rajshahi in bond by a wholesale dealer who pays a duty of Rs. 11 per seer when issuing it for sale to the retail vendors. The right

of retail sale is put up to auction.

The total receipts under the head of income tax in **Income Tax.** 1903-04 amounted to Rs. 15,654, two-thirds of which were derived from the salaries of garden managers and their staff. The receipts under the head of other sources of income amounted to Rs. 2,112 paid by 74 persons. About three-fourths of this was paid by 60 dealers in piece goods, the head under which the general merchant who sells grain, oil, salt and other miscellaneous articles is classified. Some of the largest firms of Kaiyas are, however, assessed in Calcutta on the profits that they make in Darrang. The only other assesseees under this part were five pleaders, five mauzadars, three graziers and a liquor seller. The assessment lists are annually revised by the tahsildars and mauzadars, and notices issued on those concerned to show cause if they desire to do so. Darrang is a progressive district, and the receipts under this head of revenue steadily increased from Rs. 12,300 in 1888 to Rs. 21,300 in 1900. The marked decrease which occurred in 1904 was chiefly due to the fact that the minimum taxable income was raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum by Act XI of 1903.

The receipts under the head of judicial and non-**Stamps.** judicial stamps are considerably lower than those obtained from any other district in the plains except Nowgong. In 1903-04, they only amounted to Rs. 25,577 under the former head, as compared with Rs. 17,568 in Nowgong, the lowest district in the plains, and Rs. 4,04,169 in

Sylhet. The corresponding figures for non-judicial stamps were Rs. 6,396, Rs. 3,923, and Rs. 1,51,623 respectively.

**Public
Works.**

Public works are in charge of an Executive or Assistant Engineer, who acts as Engineer of the Nowgong district and is usually assisted by two upper and four lower subordinates.

The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the large public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools, and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, circuit houses, dāk bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The provincial roads, which are directly under the department, are a section of the north trunk road, 151 miles in length, from Dumnichaki to Howhajan and the road from Mangaldai to the steamer ghat.

It has already been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the department has to contend are the absence of an artizan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour. It is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Darrang is largely due.

Government.

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions. Tezpur is under the

immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, and Mangaldai is entrusted to an Assistant Magistrate, who is almost invariably a European.

The Deputy Commissioner is allowed one subordinate magistrate and a sub-deputy collector as his assistants, and a second magistrate and a sub-deputy collector are usually posted at Mangaldai.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. In 1902, there were six stipendiary and two honorary magistrates in the district, and the former decided 943 and the latter 101 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 2,847 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 1,159 cases under the Indian Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. The people are as whole law-abiding and there is not much serious crime in Darrang, and most of these offences were either petty assaults or thefts of small sums.

The civil work in Darrang is lighter than in any other district in the plains and the Deputy Commissioner acts as sub-judge, while one of the assistant magistrates in each subdivision discharges the functions of a munsif. In 1902, the sub-judge heard three original cases and seven appeals, while 1,098 original suits were disposed of by

the munsifs. Almost all of these cases were simple money suits and more than three-fourths of them were disposed of without contest. Further details with regard to criminal and civil business will be found in Table XI.

Registration.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the Registrar of the district and one of the assistant magistrates act as sub-registrar in each subdivision. The number of documents registered is, however, very small, and in 1903 only amounted to 377; a fact which shows in a very striking manner, how extremely simple is the economic organisation of Darrang.

Volunteering.

A corps of mounted infantry was first enrolled in Darrang in 1887, with a strength of 70 members. Four years later the volunteers in the four upper districts of the valley were formed into one corps known as the Assam Valley Mounted Rifles, and in 1896 the Mounted Rifles were converted into Light Horse. The strength of the corps in 1903 was 312, 72 of whom were residing in Darrang.

Police.

The Civil Police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 2 inspectors, 16 sub-inspectors, and 221 constables. One hundred and two smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Darrang, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-countrymen, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual

course of musketry. The district is fairly free from serious crime and rural police are not employed, such assistance as is necessary being given by the village elders or *gao-bura*. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrant cases. Table XX in the appendix shows the places at which there are investigating centres and the strength of officers and men maintained at each.

A detachment, consisting of a native officer and 33 **Military Police.** non-commissioned officers and men of the Lakhimpur military police battalion, is stationed at Tezpur throughout the year. For six months in the cold weather detachments, consisting of two non-commissioned officers and twelve men, are posted at Daimara and Ghagrapara in the north of Mangaldai, while from January to March the fort at Odalguri, near the gorge through which the Dhansiri leaves the hills, is occupied by 45 non-commissioned officers and men under a native officer. This post was formerly held by a detachment from the regiment in Shillong, but the health of the sepoys was injuriously affected, and in 1902 it was decided that the work should be made over to the military police. The men of the battalion are armed with Martini Henry Rifles mark IV, kukris, and bayonets.

There is a jail at Tezpur with accommodation for 226 **Jails.** convicts. The prisoners generally enjoy fairly good

health, and in the twenty years ending with 1900 there were only three in which the number of deaths exceeded 10 and the death rate 70 per mille.* Convicts sentenced to hard labour are usually employed on oil pressing, bamboo and cane work, carpentry, weaving, brick making, and gardening. The jail premises cover an area of nearly two acres. Most of the wards have three walls of brick and the fourth of whole bamboos : the roof is generally of thatch. At Mangaldai there is a small jail with accommodation for 26 convicts. The prisoners are generally employed on gardening or oil pressing and are not detained in this jail for more than three months, convicts with a longer term being sent to Tezpur.

Education.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the condition of education in Bengal was bad enough, but in Assam it was even worse. In 1835, the District Magistrate of Darrang reported that there were only three small public schools in the district and a few private schools, and described the state of education as "deplorable.†" In 1847-48, there were 8 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress, as on the occasion of Mr. Mill's visit in 1853 there were only 9 schools of all grades. 1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in the Appendix.

* Death rate per mille, 1893, 119; 1894, 88; 1895, 75.

† File No. 298, Bengal, 1836, page 33.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total No. of pupils.	No. of persons in district to each pupil.	PERCENTAGE UNDER INSTRUCTION TO THOSE OF SCHOOL-GOING AGE.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	6	315	78	1,916	2,231	106	...	...
1880-81	8	569	95	2,540	3,109	88	14.56	0.28
1890-91	6	536	126	3,013	3,549	87	14.59	0.30
1900-01	5	599	149	4,095	4,694	72	17.62	0.43

The schools of the district are divided into five distinct grades, high, middle English, middle vernacular, upper primary, and lower primary. High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from their earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools; in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course : (1) Assamese, comprising literature, grammar

Secondary
education.

and composition, (2) history of India, (3) geography, (4) arithmetic, (5) elements of Euclid (Book I), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, (6) simple lessons on botany and agriculture. There are high schools at Tezpur and Mangaldai, and middle schools at Tezpur, Chutia, and Sipajhar.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than three per cent of the total number, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes reading, writing, dictation, simple arithmetic, and the geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, mensuration, and a little history. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs.8 per mensem for certificated and Rs.5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. The inspecting staff consists of two Deputy Inspectors of Schools.

**Medical.
The Civil
Surgeon.**

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Tezpur. It contains ten dispensaries and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important duties of the Civil Surgeon. He also acts as Superintendent of the Jail and of the

Lunatic Asylum, controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

It has already been suggested in the chapter on population that there may be something in the climate, the sub-soil level of the water, or some other factor which for the present remains obscure, which is prejudicial to life and health, but there can be no doubt that the conditions under which the people pass their days are not conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from diseases induced by chills, which might have been avoided by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The

**Unsanitary
character
of villages.**

water-supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital statistics.

Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headmen, to the mandal of the circle ; this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals as the *gaobura* was an unpaid servant of Government and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each *gaobura* 2½ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901, the mean recorded birth rate was 26 per mille, and the death rate 38 per mille, but neither of these rates can be accepted as correct. The statistics of age recorded at the census are, however, so unreliable, and the disturbing effect of immigrants is so great, that it is not possible to fix a normal birth and death rate for the district.

Causes of mortality.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death most often takes in Darrang, at any rate according to the official returns. These returns are, however, so inaccurate and so little reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examination. Most fatal illnesses

	Cholera death rate per mille.
1878	... 17.6
1886	... 8.3
1889	... 9.0
1891	... 11.9
1892	... 6.2
1895	... 6.0
1900	... 9.6
	Death rate
	All causes, Eng- land.
1901	... 16.9

are accompanied by a rise in temperature, and the villagers are in consequence very prone to ascribe every death to fever. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent, and for the purposes of comparison the death rate in England from all causes in 1901 is added. In 1878, the recorded death rate from this disease alone exceeded the total death rate of England in 1901. Small-pox also appears from time to time in a virulent form. The highest death rate recorded from this cause in recent years was 3 per mille in 1899. The people do not seem to fully appreciate the advantages conferred by vaccination, and during the five years ending with 1902-03, only 33 per mille were on the average annually protected which was 11 per mille less than the average for the Province as a whole. Dysentery and diarrhoea are common, and so are worms and various forms of skin disease. Goitre is common in villages situated on the banks of rivers, near the point at which they issue from the hills; elephantiasis is rare. Venereal disease is common amongst the immigrant population, but not amongst the Assamese.

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901.

“ When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the province, it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara, however, rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90 a specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called *beri-beri* of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and *beri-beri* were merely different names for *anchylostomiasis*, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the *dochmius duodenalis*, a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy ; but the support which was given to Dr. Giles' views by local medical opinion was withdrawn when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that *anchylostoma* were present in varying numbers in no less than 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that, whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of *anchylostomiasis* that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which could be communicated from the sick to the healthy, an opinion which was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not *anchylostomiasis*. The suggestion that malaria could be communicated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898 — ‘ Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world.’ A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry

into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever. Externally the chief point of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lies in the rapidity with which the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy."

Recent investigations have, however, thrown some doubt on the malarial theory. Certain parasites called Leishman Donovan bodies have been discovered in the spleens of fever patients, and it is thought possible that they may be the causes of the complaint. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture. As to its effects there can unhappily be no question.

The disease appears to have entered the Mangaldai

	Percentage Popula- tion 1891. variation between 1891 and 1901.	subdivision in 1890 and was especially virulent in the Patharughat, Mangal- dai, and Kalaigaon tahsils and in the Ambagaon and Harisinga mauzas near the
Mangaldai tahsil...	36,152 —21	
Patharughat „ ...	45,821 —21	
Kalaigaon „ ...	55,691 —6	
Ambagaon mauza...	5,794 —21	
Harisinga „ ...	5,660 —14	

Bhutan Hills. The statement in the margin shows the percentage of decrease in population that occurred in these areas between 1891 and 1901.

It has also appeared near Tezpur and Bishnath, but has not as yet produced a very high mortality in this portion of the district, though it is still fairly common in many places in Darrang.

**Increase in
facilities for
obtaining
medical aid.**

	Dispensaries	Patients treated.	Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the statement in the margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 15 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 176 to 487. The principal dispensaries are those situated at Tezpur, Mangaldai, and Sipajhar which had in 1903 a daily average attendance ranging from 59 to 62. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, dysentery and diarrhoea, dyspepsia, and rheumatic affections.
	No.	No.	
1881	2	3,968	
1891	2	12,191	
1901	10	59,783	

The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXV.

There are very few professional midwives amongst the Assamese, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrificed, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and

the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance; if the labour is a natural one, all is well, but if complications arise, the case has usually a fatal termination. Many lives are also lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.

There is a lunatic asylum at Tezpur to which insane persons are sent from the Assam Valley and the Hill districts. The population in 1903 was 155, and the average cost of maintaining each of the inmates was Rs. 55. The grounds are tastefully laid out, and those of the patients who are not suffering from insanity in an acute and dangerous form are employed in the garden attached to the asylum and encouraged to do light work of other kinds. Lunatic
Asylum.

A professional revenue survey of the district was made at the time when Assam was still a division of Bengal and the maps were published in 1877. They are on the scale of one mile to the inch, and show the sites of villages and the physical features of the district. A smaller map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1882 and was brought up to date in 1901. Survey.

An area of 857 square miles which included the more densely populated portions of the district was cadastrally surveyed in the seasons of 1886-87 and 1891-92. The maps are on the scale of 16 inches to the mile, and in addition to topographical features show the boundaries of each field. Certain areas which were omitted by the professional party were subsequently surveyed by local agency, on the basis of a theodolite traverse, and the results obtained have been utilized in the revision of the one inch maps.*

* The area so surveyed up to 30th September 1900 was 130 square miles.

APPENDIX.

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STATEMENT A.

List of tea gardens.

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Village in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1903.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 30th June 1904.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TEZPUR SUB-DIVISION.			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.		
1. Aberdeen ...	Mr. W. Penny	...	25	820	Included in Sakomati.	286	
2. Adabari ...	British Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	...	15	2,075	804	1,028	Col. 6 includes figure for New Adabari.
3. Balipara ...	Do.	Do. ...	18	957	475	657	
4. Bangson ...	Bangson Tea Co.	Do. ...	16	948	580	1,109	
5. Barbheel ...	Messrs. A. Levick, E. M. Chichester and E. B. Magor.	Behali ...	45	1,125	285	529	
6. Bargang ...	Bargang Tea Co., Ltd.	Do. ...	46	1,455	565	2,307	Col. 7 includes figure for Ketela.

STATEMENT A.

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7.	Borjuli ...	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	Bansbari...	19	3,280	1,922	4,473	Cols. 6 and 7 include figures for Thakurbari.
8.	Barpakburi	Barpakburi Tea Co., Ltd.	Bishnath ...	24	1,710	497	1,277	
9.	Bedetti ...	Majuli Tea Co., Ltd.	Behali ...	45	393	783	482	
10.	Behali ...	Do. do.	Do. ...	43	1,829		1,183	
11.	Belsiri ...	Charduar Tea Co., Ltd.	Barchola...	25	457	280	706	
12.	Bheer ...	Majuli Tea Co., Ltd.	Bishnath...	26	284	Included in Mijika.	87	
13.	Bindukuri.	Bengal United Tea Co., Ltd.	Haleswar,	9	1,582	1,006	1,253	Col. 6 includes figures for Gogra and Haleswar.
14.	Charduar...	Charduar Tea Co., Ltd.	Bargaon ...	18	1,053	421	1,099	
15.	Debapar ...	Babus Girish Chandra De and Dhananjay De.	Haleswar ..	3	425	93	79	
16.	Dhekiajuli.	Dhekiajuli Tea Co., Ltd.	Barchola...	23	1,039	378	708	
17.	Dhendai ...	Messrs. A. B. Moore, A. B. Thom, G. D. Paton, T. Hriscoe and Col. D. M. Lumsden.	Bansbari...	22	1,466	678	1,371	
18.	Dikrai ...	Bishnath Tea Co., Ltd.	Nagaankar	20	2,787	1,051	1,923	
19.	Diplonga...	Do. do.	Chutia ..	24	2,535	Included in Pratapgarh	...	
20.	Dulapadang	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	Bansbari ..	16	2,560	791	1,521	

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1903.	Area under tea (both immature and mature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 30th June 1904.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TEZPUR SUB-DIVISION—(contd.)			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.		
21. Gelabating	Gelabating Tea Co., Ltd.	Chilabandha	19	1,881	385	761	
22. Ghiladhari	Majuli Tea Co., Ltd.	Chutia	26	1,556	Included in Majuligarh.	1,030	
23. Ghoirali	Messrs. T. J. Walker, F. L. H. Koch and Dr. Warburton.	Banabari	20	1,775	450	646	
24. Ginjaibheel	Ginjaibheel Tea Syndicate	Baghmara	34	1,247	494	775	
25. Gogra	Bengal United Tea Co., Ltd.	Banabari	11	2,044	Included in Bindukuri	336	
26. Haleswar	Do.	Haleswar	10	697	Do.	327	

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27.	Hanchara ..	Bhareli Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Balipara ...	17	1,955	Included in Thekrajuli.	
28.	Hathibari...	Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Co., Ltd.	Tea	Do. ...	19	1,662	766	970 Cols. 6 and 7 include figures for Paisajuli.
29.	Kacharigaon	Messrs. A. Y. Thomson, G. F. Moore, A. B. Moore, G. A. Dolby and G. D. Paton.		Do. ...	19	958	500	796
30.	Kalapani ...	Majuli Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Baghmara	28	2,660	Included in Mijika.	1,328
31.	Kathalguri	H. W. Bruce, Mrs. Eliza Campbell, Mrs. Henderson Kay, Mrs. Walker and Mrs. H. Moore.	Camp-	Haleswar ...	10	1,087	792	1,017 Col. 6 includes figure for Rupajuli.
32.	Ketela ...	Bargang Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Behali ...	44	1,352	554	Included in Bargang.
33.	Kolony ...	Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Co., Ltd.	Trad-	Balipara ...	21	684	623	859
34.	Korsontola	Bishnath Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Barbhagia	16	269	Included in Pratapgargh	
35.	Majuligargh	Majuli Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Bishnath ...	23	1,696	1,039	2,100 Col. 6 includes figure for Ghiladhari.
36.	Mijika ...	Do. do.	...	Baghmara	27	1,906	1,423	1,714 Col. 6 includes figure for Kalapani.
37.	Modopi ...	Darrang Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Haleswar...	9	956	515	973
38.	Monabari...	Imperial Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Baghmara...	36	2,876	1,011	1,713
39.	Monai ...	National Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Nagasankar	23	3,051	455	1,075
40.	Naharani...	Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Co., Ltd.	Trad-	Balipara ...	20	1,884	799	1,433

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Manza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivi- sional head- quarters.	Area on 31st December 1903.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 30th June 1904.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TEZPUR SUB-DIVISION— (contd.)			Miles.	Acres.	Acres.		
41. Namgaon ..	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	Balipara ...	17	913	639	1,334	
42. New Adabari	British Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Do. ...	17	1,442	Included in Adabari.	402	
43. Pabhoi ...	Bishnath Tea Co., Ltd.	Bishnath ...	27	2,075	437	862	
44. Paisajuli ...	Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Co., Ltd.	Balipara ...	18	49	Included in Hathibari.		
45. Panipota ...	Bhareli Tea Co., Ltd.	Balipara ...	22	2,440	Included in Phulbari.		

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46	Pratapgarh, ...	Bishnath Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Bishnath...	21	1,688	890	2,087	Cols. 6 and 7 include figures for Diphonga, Korson to la and Sadharu.
47.	Phulbari ...	Bhareli Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Balipara ...	21	1,530	1,327	2,088	Cols. 6 and 7 include figures for Paupota.
48.	Rangagarh ...	Mr. G. Chisholm ...	...	Behali ...	49	1,602	300	581	
49.	Rupajuli ...	H. W. Bruce, Mrs. Eliza Campbell, Mrs. Henderson Kay, Mrs. Walker and Mrs. H. Moore.	...	Bansbari...	12	990	Included in Kathalguri.	506	
50.	Sadharu ...	Bishnath Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Bishnath..	24	649	Included in Pratapgarh		
51.	Sadharu-ghope.	Sakomati Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do. ...	24	1,055	Included in Sakomati.	1,532	Col. 7 includes figure for Sakomati.
52.	Sakomati ...	Do. do.	...	Bishnath...	23	702	984	Included in Sadharu-ghope.	Col. 6 includes figures for Aberdeen and Sadharu-ghope.
53.	Sesa ...	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Haleawar...	13	1,998	465	937	
54.	Singli ...	Messrs. W. N. Edwards, A. A. Glass, and F. H. Edwards.	...	Behali ...	56	827	509	1,141	
55.	Singri ...	Estate of the late Mr. G. W. S. Browne.	...	Barchola...	27	506	240	184	

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Vauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1903.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 30th June 1904.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
TEZPUR SUB-DIVISION—(concl'd.)							
56. Solabari ...	Sonabheel Tea Co., Ltd.	Haleswar.	9	993	461	746	
57. Sonabheel.	Do. do.	Do. ...	9	850			
58. Sonajuli ...	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	Bansbari...	21	2,349	1,160	2,274	
59. Tamajuli ...	Imperial Tea Co., Ltd.	Do. ...	22	1,198	695	1,197	
60. Thakurbari,	Empire of India and Ceylon Tea Co., Ltd.	Do. ...	19	1,015	Included in Barjuli.		
61. Thetrajuli,	Bhareli Tea Co., Ltd.	Balipara ...	17	1,714	383	787	Cols. 6 and 7 include figures for Hanchara.

STATEMENT A.

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MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.									
1. Atharikhat	Atharikhat Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Sekhar ...	30	6,031	1,185	2,727		
2. Bangalagarh	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	...	Bangalagarh	2½	126	120	231		
3. Barrongajuli	Atharikhat Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Sekhar ...	26	1,559	300	561		
4. Bhergaon...	Do.	...	Kalitakuchi	37	410	226	411		
5. Bhutiachang	Bhutiachang Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Jhaparabari	32	2,242	881	1,463		
6. Bongong ...	Messrs. T. J. Walker and J. Walker.	...	Silaikuchi	18	354	Included in Kanthali.	145		
7. Dimakuchi	Dimakuchi Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Sekhar ...	30	1,510	467	416		
8. Ghagrapara	Logan Bros.	...	Harisinga	25	1,308	278	784		
9. Gronland...	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	...	Samabari and Chapai	14	3,024	Included in Singramari	546		
10. Hatigar ...	Consolidated Tea and Lands Co.,	...	Jhaparabari	25	7,562	2,721	2,680		Cols. 5, 6 & 7 include figures for Khoirabari and Majuli.
11. Kaupati ...	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	...	Dalkaon ...	18	2,156	324	649		
12. Kherkheria	Logan Bros.	...	Harisinga	32	1,352	367	1,002		
13. Khoirabari	Consolidated Tea and Lands Co.	...	Jhaparabari	28	Included in Hatigar.				

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(concl'd.)

Name of garden.	Name of owners or Company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area on 31st December 1903.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on 30th June 1904.	Remarks.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)							
14. Kobirali ...	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	...	18	233	Included in Singramari		
15. Kunderbil...	Logan Bros.	Ambagaon	35	654	337	586	
16. Majbat ...	Messrs Bridge Brothers	Orang ...	42	1,172	420	703	
17. Majuli ...	Consolidated Tea and Lands Co.	Jhaparabari	29	Included in Hatigar.			
18. Orangaajuli	Assam Duars Tea Co.	Sekhar ...	34	5,192	710	1,199	
19. Panbari ...	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	Samabari...	16	2,935	Included in Singramari.	245	

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20. Paneri or Kasbil.	Atharikhath Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Jhaparabari	27	5,331	717	2,517	
21. Ranthali ...	Messrs. T. J. Walker and J. Walker.	...	Ranthali...	13	3,612	563	413	Col. 6 includes figures for Bongong and Tokonkata.
22. Rowta ...	Messrs. King Hamilton and Co.,	...	Orang ...	32	727	280	308	
23. Rupatal ...	Messrs. Bridge Brothers	...	Dalgaon ...	14	384	Included in Singramari	95	
24. Singramari	Do.	do.	Kalaigaon	11	1,426	1,500	727	Col. 6 includes figures for Gronland, Kobirali, Panbari, and Rupatal and col. 7 for Kobirali.
25. Tangani ...	Do.	do.	Dhula ...	7	530	280	260	
26. Tokonkata	Messrs. T. J. Walker and J. Walker.	...	Dalgaon ...	17	250	Included in Ranthali.	75	

STATEMENT B-
List of Post Offices.

Post office.				Mauza or tahsil in which situated.
Balipara *	...	...	...	Balipara mauza.
Barjuli *	...	...	...	Tezpur tahsil.
Behali *	...	...	...	Behali mauza.
Bindukuri *	...	...	...	Tezpur tahsil.
Bishnathghat *	...	...	...	Chutia tahsil.
Charali *	...	...	...	Do.
Chutia *	...	...	...	Do.
Dhekiajuli *	...	...	...	Barchola mauza.
Gohpur	...	...	...	Gohpur mauza.
Helem	...	...	...	Behali mauza.
Jamugurihat	...	...	...	Chutia tahsil.
Kalaigaon *	...	...	...	Kalaigaon tahsil.
Mangaldai *	...	...	...	Mangaldai tahsil.
Odalguri	...	...	...	Barsilajhar mauza.
Orang	...	...	...	Orang mauza.
Panerihat *	...	...	...	Bengbari mauza.
Patharughat	...	...	...	Patharughat tahsil.
Rangamatighat *	...	...	...	Mangaldai tahsil.
Singribarighat	...	...	...	Kalaigaon tahsil.
Tezpur	...	...	...	Tezpur town.
Thakurbari	...	...	...	Falipara mauza.

* Combined post and telegraph office.

There is also a departmental telegraph office at Tezpur.

STATEMENT C.

List of the most important trading villages.

Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.	Tahsil or mauza	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
<i>Tezpur Subdivision.</i>			Barchola mauza	Dhekiajuli gaon Singimari ...	7 3
Gohpur mauza	Gohpur ...	3	<i>Mangaldai Subdivision.</i>		
	Kalabari ...	3			
	Kalangpur ...	7			
Behali Do.	Bishanathia Domgaon.	3	Orang mauza	Saikiachubri	3
	Jalukbari ...	5			
Chutia tahsil	Bamgaon (Charali)	5			
	Charaijonia ...	3	Harisinga mauza.	Bengbari ...	3
	Itakhali ...	4		Ghagra para...	3
	Mudhab Barmapur	3			
	Malorgaon ...	3	Wangaldai tahsil.	Ahokachubri	4
	Nij Barbhagia (Jamguri).	3		Asang ...	4
	Nij Bishnath ...	4		Baina Ojhapara	3
	Rangamati ...	3		Bheborghat	3
				Bhokeli Mardal.	5
				Chengeliapara	3
				Chota Athiabari.	3
				Kamaipara ...	5
				Mangaldai town.	
				Nij Rangamati	3
Balipara mauza	Amarabari ...	3			
	Balipara ...	4	Patharughat tahsil.	Chengpara ...	3
	Rangapara ...	5			
Tezpur tahsil	Haleswar ...	3	Kalaigaon tahsil.	Kalaigaon ...	4
	Tezpur town ...		Jhaparabari mauza.	Panerigrant ..	7

STATEMENT D.
List of markets.

Tahsil or mauza.	Name of place at which market held.	Days of week when held.	Tahsil or mauza.	Name of place at which market held.	Days of week when held.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.			MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.		
Behali mauza	Amtala ...	Sunday ...	Orang mauza ...	Majbat garden hat at Namati.	Wednesday.
	Behali bagan ...	Do. ...	Orang	...	Monday.
	Behali hat ...	Do. ...	Rowta	...	Tuesday.
	Jaintia hat ...	Do. ...	Dalgaon mauza ...	Koupati	Sunday.
	Ketelakhelmati ...	Do. ...	Barsilajhar mauza...	Odalguri	Monday and Friday.
Chutia tahsil	Barpukhuri ...	Friday ...	Ambagaon mauza ...	Dimnuguri	Monday.
	Charali ...	Sunday			
	Chutia ...	Do. ...			
	Ithakali ...	Do. ...	Harisinga mauza ...	Ghagrapara	Do.

STATEMENT D.

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	Jamuguri	...	Do. ...	Silpota mauza ...	Puthimari	...	Saturday.
	Majuligarh	...	Wednesday.				
	Pabhoi	...	Tuesday ...	Samabari mauza ...	Barbagicha	...	Sunday.
Rajpara mauza	Amaribari	...	Sunday ...	Mangaldai tahsil ...	Bangalagarh	...	Friday.
	Bamgaon	...	Do.	...	Mangaldai town	...	Every day.
	Barjuli	...	Do. ...	...	Tangonijhar	...	Saturday.
	Bindukuri	...	Do. ...	Patharughat tahsil,	Patharughat	...	Thursday.
	Dipota hat	...	Monday and Thursday.	Kalaigaon tahsil ...	Kahimala	...	Friday.
	Garaimari	...	Sunday and Wednesday.	...	Kalaigaon	...	Sunday.
	Saraka hat	...	Sunday ...	...	Khairabari	...	Saturday.
	Tezpur bazar	...	Every day.	...	Kotahi	...	Do.
		...			Puskia	...	Do.
Bargaon mauza	Ulabari hat	...	Sunday ...	Jhaparabari mauza	Paneri grant	...	Sunday.
Barchola mauza	Dhekisajuli	...	Do. ...	Sekhar mauza ...	Singribari	...	Do.

STATEMENT E.

List of fairs.

Mauza.				Village.
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.				
Bangalagarh	...	...	...	Bamunpara.
"	...	...	...	Kurapara.
Chapara	...	...	...	Kumarpara.
Dipila	...	...	...	Alikakh.
Hindughopa	...	...	...	Ghopa.
Kalitakuchi	...	...	...	Mahia.
Silpota	...	...	...	Puthimar
Sipajhar	...	...	...	Bhuktab
Nij Odalguri	...	...	...	Odalguri.
Lokrai	...	...	...	Bejpara.

TABLE I.

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TABLE I.
Average maximum and minimum temperatures registered at Tespur town.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Year.
Maximum temperature	71°·7	76°·1	82°·5	83°·2	86°·0	88°·0	89°·8	87°·8	87°·4	84°·9	78°·7	72°·7	82°·4
Minimum temperature	51°·0	54°·8	62°·2	66°·9	72°·1	76°·2	77°·7	77°·6	76°·2	70°·9	61°·4	52°·9	66°·7

Note. — The figures have been compiled on the data for three years.

TABLE II.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shown in brackets against the name of each station.

Months.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.					
	Kherkheria (15 years).	Balipara (9 years).	Gohpur (13 years).	Mangaldai (29 years).	Kabira (17 years).	Tespur (45 years).
January ...	1.14	0.81	0.82	0.66	0.64	0.59
February ...	1.06	0.98	1.23	0.83	0.86	0.90
March ...	2.51	2.83	3.26	3.43	2.62	2.43
April ...	6.41	5.84	8.97	7.06	6.62	6.08
May ...	14.90	12.13	14.43	10.64	11.26	9.68
June ...	21.80	14.28	14.94	12.86	14.48	12.69
July ...	21.04	17.02	20.11	12.01	11.57	14.33
August ...	14.62	16.37	17.93	10.88	9.09	12.84
September ...	12.64	12.00	15.58	7.17	5.78	8.96
October ...	4.57	6.99	5.29	3.37	2.45	3.36
November ...	0.85	0.29	0.87	0.36	0.14	0.72
December ...	1.03	0.61	0.68	0.32	0.40	0.50
Total of year	102.57	90.05	104.14	69.59	65.91	73.08

TABLE III.

Distribution of population.

Tahsil or mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
Tezpur tahsil ...	57,441	41,977	+15,464	307.69	186	20,944
Chutia do. ...	49,692	36,810	+12,882	598.60	83	17,562
Balipara ...	18,456	13,671	+4,785	182.27	101	11,330
Bargaon ...	15,738	10,777	+4,961	444.08	35	2,244
Gohpur ...	25,408	16,255	+9,151	508.22	49	5,799
Mangaldai tahsil ...	28,475	36,152	-7,677	175.62	162	834
Kalaigaon do. ...	52,160	55,691	-3,531	254.04	205	3,545
Patharughat do. ...	36,177	45,821	-9,644	168.23	215	...
Sekhar ...	11,010	7,687	+3,323	130.96	84	5,688
Jhaparabari ...	9,902	6,034	+3,868	62.63	158	6,678
Harisinga ...	4,873	5,660	-787	26.8	186	2,429
Ambagaon ...	4,561	5,794	-1,233	35.41	128	735
Sonaigaon ...	1,374	2,064	-690	65.63	20	...
Barsilajhar ...	4,240	4,239	+1	36.75	115	...
Petuachubri ...	4,143	3,860	+283	29.99	138	4
Langapani ...	2,340	3,319	-979	51.81	45	...
Dalgaon ...	5,543	5,482	+61	208.93	26	718
Orang ...	5,782	6,147	-365	130.78	44	1,003
Total district ...	387,313	307,440	+79,873	3,471.82	99	79,513

NOTE.—Where not otherwise stated a unit should be taken to represent a mauza.

TABLE IV.
General statistics of population.

Particulars.	TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.		MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
POPULATION 1901 ...	89,487	77,246	56,543	84,037	176,030	161,283
1891 ...	65,785	53,705	95,435	92,515	161,220	146,220
1881 ...	106,957		166,055		142,257	130,755
1872 ...	32,380	29,242	90,296	83,770	122,676	113,012
VARIATION 1891-1901 ...	+23,702	+23,541	-8,892	-8,478	+14,810	+15,063
1881-1891 ...	+12,533		+21,896		+18,963	+15,465
1872-1881 ...	+45,335		-8,011		+19,581	+17,743
1901						
RELIGION—Total Hindus ...	77,870	68,368	47,529	45,551	125,399	113,919
Mahapurushias ...	20,247	19,032	3,637	3,646	23,884	22,678

TABLE IV.

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Other Vaishnavas ...	11,384	9,208	24,911	25,867	36,235	35,075
Saktists ...	15,343	13,049	8,819	7,770	24,192	20,839
Sivaïtes ...	820	655	120	61	940	716
Muhammadians ...	2,879	1,574	6,545	6,374	9,424	7,948
Animistic ...	7,910	6,853	31,857	31,838	30,767	38,691
Total Christians ...	515	382	235	226	750	608
Anglican Communion ...	279	214	154	152	433	366
Minor denominations ...	107	93	67	47	174	140
Other religions ...	313	69	377	48	690	117
CIVIL CONDITION—Unmarried ...	44,141	32,308	46,272	35,158	90,413	67,466
Married ...	37,886	34,133	34,778	34,196	72,964	68,329
Widowed ...	7,460	10,805	5,493	14,683	12,953	25,488
LITERACY—Literate in Assamese ...	3,413	183	2,435	57	5,848	240
Literate in English ...	899	50	258	6	1,157	56
Illiterate ...	83,441	76,860	83,512	83,949	166,953	160,809
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—Assamese... ..	36,018	31,346	52,000	52,030	89,018	83,376
Eastern Hindi ...	4,407	3,370	2,854	1,518	7,261	4,883
Bengali ...	27,170	25,616	5,413	4,609	32,583	30,224
Bodo or Plains Kachari ...	4,424	3,383	23,213	23,983	27,637	27,366

The Orang mauza which in 1891 contained a population of 6,147 persons was transferred from Tezpur to Mangaldai in 1891 and two villages with a population of 321 persons were transferred from Mangaldai to Nowgong in 1893. Necessary adjustments have been made.

TABLE V.

TABLE V.

Birth place, race, caste, and occupation.

	TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.		MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH PLACE.—Born in the district	45,182	42,304	74,245	75,169	119,377	117,473
" other parts of Province	6,970	2,914	3,709	2,121	10,679	5,035
" Chota Nagpur	17,923	17,593	3,139	2,883	21,061	20,476
" other parts of Bengal	7,387	5,334	2,320	1,677	9,707	7,011
" United Provinces	1,018	670	347	331	1,365	1,001
" Central Provinces	5,112	4,873	1,178	1,046	6,290	5,959
" Nepal	2,415	1,173	563	180	2,977	1,353
" Khasi	3,530	2,385	1,044	590	4,574	2,975
" Khasi	2,348	2,481	222	205	2,570	2,686
" Boria	1,722	1,702	162	210	1,874	1,912
" Brahman	2,340	1,747	1,294	1,051	3,634	2,793
" Eurasian	14	12	...	1	14	13
" European (a)	128	39	33	3	161	42
" Ganak	182	257	2,781	3,026	2,963	3,283
" Jugi	3,961	3,687	4,581	4,821	8,542	8,508
" Kachari	6,480	4,890	26,942	24,914	33,422	29,804
" Kalita	5,896	4,116	3,794	4,030	9,690	8,146
RACE AND CASTE.—						
Bhuiya	...	...	...	...	...	...
Boria	...	...	...	...	...	...
Brahman	...	...	...	...	...	...
Eurasian	...	...	...	...	...	...
European (a)	...	...	...	...	...	...
Ganak	...	...	...	...	...	...
Jugi	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kachari	...	...	...	...	...	...
Kalita	...	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE V.

	816	531	232	110	1,048	641
Kayastha ...	4,304	3,292	3,242	2,785	7,546	6,077
Kewat and Kaibartia ...	7,818	6,766	16,246	16,597	24,064	23,363
Koch ...	5,787	6,057	1,202	1,084	6,989	7,141
Munda ...	4,355	4,146	1,136	1,145	5,491	5,291
Nadiyal ...	2,287	2,404	251	255	2,538	2,659
Oraon ...	384	436	7,133	7,478	7,517	7,914
Rabha ...	4,633	4,265	1,058	1,205	5,691	5,470
Santal ...	...	...	...	...	118,239	98,028
Workers ...	...	...	...	...	121,046	both sexes
Dependents ...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total supported ...	46,056	42,348	64,749	65,135	110,805	107,483
Land holders ...	2,572	2,135	6,052	5,709	8,624	7,844
Tenants ...	28,106	27,587	10,201	8,635	38,307	36,222
Garden labourers ...	...	...	...	...	...	...

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE VI.

Vital statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.
1901	337,313	31.35	35.19	1.01	0.54	23.89	3.91
1902	Do.	33.54	35.72	0.73	0.08	25.71	3.06
1903	Do.	35.26	38.10	3.76	0.09	24.90	2.77
1904	Do.	34.31	33.22	0.77	0.58	22.87	2.63
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE VII.
Crop statistics.

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area...	282,699	300,601	310,115	309,062								
Rice	187,085	202,295	207,901	211,642								
Mustard	9,601	12,664	14,427	14,462								
Sugarcane	1,788	2,499	2,462	2,261								
Pulse	10,970	11,853	12,465	11,510								
All other crops	73,255	71,290	72,860	69,187								
TEA.	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.												
Number of gardens,	64	62	61	61								
Area in acres	88,590	88,870	91,084	90,173								
Area under plant in	29,338	30,043	28,821	29,001								
acres.												
Outturn in lbs.	10,364,763	11,624,372	11,829,148	11,450,280								
Labour force	38,835	40,335	37,828	38,814								
Labourers includ-	2,862	...	4,238	2,634								
ing dependents												
imported during												
the year.*												

* Figures for 1903 and subsequent years relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VII.
Crop statistics—(concl.)

Particulars.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.
TEA.												
MANGALDAI SUB-DIVISION.												
Number of gardens,	33	33	26	26								
Area in acres ...	49,239	52,163	50,181	51,534								
Area under plant in acres.	11,199	12,053	11,676	10,940								
Outturn in lbs. ...	3,078,316	4,099,798	3,954,139	4,331,803								
Labour force ...	14,728	14,396	11,893	13,271								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	1,258		1,091	570								
TOTAL DISTRICT.												
Number of gardens,	97	95	87	87								
Area in acres ...	137,929	141,033	141,265	141,707								
Area under plant in acres	39,772	41,479	39,949	39,426								
Area under plant in acres { Euro-peans. Held by natives.	665	617	548	515								
Outturn in lbs. ...	13,943,079	15,724,170	15,783,287	15,732,083								
Labour force ...	53,563	54,731	49,721	52,085								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	4,120	...	5,329	3,204								

* Figures for 1903 and subsequent years relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VIII.
Reserved Forests.

Name of Reserve.	Area in square miles.	RECEIPTS.									
		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.
		Ra.	Ra.	R.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.	Ra.
Western Range.	...	3,186	1,596	1,442	1,210						
Khalingduar	...	...	...	92	...						
(Singri hill	2										
Bhomoraguri	1	30	12	1	9						
Garumari (205 acres)	...	4	49	...	50						
Central Range.											
Charduar	...	12,137	1,716	15,542	744						
Balpara	...	8,803	1,804	2,638	2,961						
Eastern Range.	...										
Nowduar	82	7,027	928	1,469	279						

TABLE IX.
Fire protection and outturn of timber and fuel and value of minor forest produce.

Details.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Area under protection in sq. miles.	36	36	36	36								
Area protected in sq. miles...	34	36	36	31								
Percentage ...	94	100	100	86								
Cost ... Rs. ...	532	848	315	354								
Area Reserved Forests.												
Area in sq. miles...	321	321	321	321								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only).												
Timber c. ft. ...	31,519	29,414	32,391	18,289								
Fuel c. ft. ...	10,944	11,264	20,286	22,464								
Unclassed State Forests.												
Area in sq. miles...	2,174	2,137	2,127	2,126								
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)												
Timber c. ft. ...	51,709	53,828	55,742	47,575								
Fuel c. ft. ...	28,243	20,802	25,858	25,868								
Rubber	41,318	18,563	24,102	22,319								
Forest receipts	68,473	20,459	37,491	36,475								
Forest expenditure	44,084	35,855	26,349	33,155								
Surplus or deficit	+24,489	-16,386	+11,132	+3,320								

TABLE X.

*Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee
at selected marts.*

		TEZPUR.			MANGALDAI.		
		Common rice.	Salt.	Mati- kalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mati- kalai.
1880 {	2nd week of February ...	12	6½	16	...	...	...
	Do. do. of August ...	12	6½	12	...	...	...
1890 {	Do. do. of February ...	20	9	12	24	8	16
	Do. do. of August ...	12½	8	14	14	8	12
1900 {	Do. do. of February ...	16½	10	15	24	8	9
	Do. do. of August ...	12½	10	12	16	8	9
1901 {	Do. do. of February ...	12½	10	11	16	8	9
	Do. do. of August ...	8	9	11½	10	8	8
1902 {	Do. do. of February ...	14	10	13	16	8	8
	Do. do. of August ...	11	10	13	13	8	8
1903 {	Do. do. of February ...	16	11	15	20	8	10½
	Do. do. of August ...	13	11	13	16	10½	9
1904 {	Do. do. of February ...	18	11	14	18	8	16
	Do. do. of August ...	14	11	14	16	8	16
1905 {	Do. do. of February ...	16	11	14	21	11	16
	Do. do. of August ...						
1906 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						
1907 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						
1908 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						
1909 {	Do. do. February ...						
	Do. do. August ...						
1910 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						
1911 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						
1912 {	Do. do. of February ...						
	Do. do. of August ...						

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	28	17	10	8	19	17
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	4	3	5	2	8	6
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	3	1	3	1	3	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—28, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	29	14	24	18	24	17
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	5	1	1	1	1	1
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	8	4	5	4	6	2
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 429, 430—433 and 435—40.	8	2	10	1	10	2
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	73	16	65	11	60	10
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	8	2	10	5	12	5

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	..	..	...	...	..	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	150	72	96	36	114	54
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	8	8	2	1	17	12
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	9	5	9	7	9	8
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	10	5	3	...	5	...
Total ...	343	150	243	95	307	134
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	3	2	6	2	3	2
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	9	3	7	3	..	...
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302--304, 307, 308 and 396.	3	2	4	4	3	1
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333, and 335.	13	5	11	6	11	4

XI.

and Civil Justice—(continued).

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	1	1	3	1	1	1
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	4	1	3	1	5	1
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	11	5	6	1	12	3
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, section 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	54	8	60	13	32	5
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	1	1	2	1	3	3
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	2	1	1	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382	76	31	42	17	45	19
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	7	6	5	5	12	12
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	7	2	2	3*	1	1
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	4	1	5	3	1	2
Total	192	68	158	59	130	54

* One case of

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	31	19	16	10	22	19
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	12	6	12	5	8	6
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	6	3	7	3	6	2
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	42	19	35	24	35	21
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	6	2	4	2	2	2
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	12	5	8	5	11	3
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 423, 429, 430—433 and 435—40	19	7	16	2	22	3
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	127	24	125	24	122	21
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	9	3	12	6	4	3

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and Civil Justice—(continued).

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TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heds of Crime.	1902.		1903		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(conold.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	2	1	1	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382	226	103	138	53	169	73
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	15	14	7	6	29	24
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	16	7	11	10	10	9
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	14	6	8	3	6	2
Total	535	218	401	154	437	188
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and moveables	...	1,053	...	1,003	...	...
Title and other suits	...	52	...	66	...	...
Rent suits	...	36	...	64	...	...
Total	...	1,141	...	1,133	...	...

TABLE
Fluctuations in

Proportion of fluctuating area to total

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.					
Settled area ...	194,787	200,578	208,275	214,786	
Area excluded from settlement ...	10,976	8,813	7,098	7,077	
Area included in settlement ...	13,052	13,412	15,204	15,551	
Revenue demand Rs. ...	3,17,106	3,25,010	3,44,167	3,55,809	
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.					
Settled area ...	218,926	216,548	218,552	217,315	
Area excluded from settlement...	11,585	18,895	10,113	11,341	
Area included in settlement ...	7,605	16,474	12,435	11,020	
Revenue demand Rs. ...	4,01,292	3,74,964	3,79,709	3,73,640	
TOTAL DISTRICT.					
Settled area ...	413,713	417,126	426,827	432,101	
Area excluded from settlement ...	22,561	27,708	17,211	18,419	
Area included in settlement ...	20,657	29,886	27,639	26,571	
Revenue demand Rs. ...	7,18,398	7,02,974	7,23,876	7,29,249	

TABLE XII.

XII.

settled area.

settled area in 1903-04 { Tezpur subdivision—5 per cent.
(Mangaldai „ —5 „

[illegible]

TABLE
Finance

Principal Heads.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary)	4,85,493	7,00,910	7,01,047	7,24,077	6,95,528	
„ (miscellaneous)	13,507	13,751	21,644	21,661	15,343	
Provincial rates ...	36,196	51,101	50,997	52,280	50,797	
Judicial stamps ...	22,962	26,301	29,479	28,980	25,577	
Non-judicial stamps ...	5,716	6,501	6,195	6,600	6,396	
Opium ...	2,58,205	2,60,784	2,30,477	2,45,043	2,56,716	
Country spirits ...	27,308	64,424	58,687	55,966	58,433	
Ganja ..	11,888	16,725	15,280	16,655	18,650	
Other heads of excise ...	872	1,348	1,431	1,016	716	
Assessed taxes ...	15,271	20,279	20,820	20,417	15,654	
No. of assesses per mille	1	1	1	1	1	
Forests ...	29,711	68,473	20,459	37,481	36,475	
Registration...	592	614	473	508	577	
Total ...	9,07,721	12,31,221	11,56,889	12,10,684	11,80,862	

TABLE XIV.
Miscellaneous land revenue.

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.												
Elephants	2,680	9,848	10,129	3,491								
Fisheries	5,032	5,740	6,127	6,016								
Total revenue	9,850	17,105	17,122	11,429								
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.												
Elephants	...	...	...	435								
Fisheries	3,245	3,875	2,979	3,347								
Total revenue	3,901	4,539	4,539	3,914								
TOTAL DISTRICT.												
Elephants	2,680	9,848	10,129	3,926								
Fisheries	8,277	9,615	9,106	9,363								
Other heads	2,784	2,181	2,426	2,054								
Total revenue	13,751	21,644	21,661	15,343								

TABLE
Land

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	107,155	111,919	119,365	123,613
Held on ordinary tenure ...	103,066	107,830	115,276	119,524
Held revenue-free (lakhiraj) ...	2,209	2,209	2,209	2,209
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj).	1,880	1,880	1,880	1,880
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	86,638	87,671	87,922	90,184
Area of fee-simple and com-muted grants.	27,788	27,756	27,756	27,756
Area settled under other special rules.	293	293	293	293
Area settled on 30 years' lease	50,851	51,906	52,592	54,834
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	7,706	7,716	7,281	7,301
Total land settled under other ten-ures.	994	988	988	989
Total settled area of subdivision ...	194,787	200,578	208,275	214,786
Total unsettled area of subdivision,	1,111,453	1,105,662	1,097,965	1,091,454
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	166,660	166,242	168,307	165,888
Held on ordinary tenure ...	136,632	134,214	136,290	133,848
Held revenue-free (lakhiraj)	2,861	2,861	2,861	2,862
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj)	29,167	29,167	29,156	29,178
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	50,219	50,257	50,196	51,376

TABLE
Land

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Area of fee-simple and com- muted grants.	23,121	23,153	23,153	24,441
Area settled on 30 years' lease	23,179	23,180	22,932	22,931
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	3,919	3,924	4,111	4,004
Total land settled under other ten- ures.	47	49	49	51
Total settled area of subdivision,	218,926	216,548	218,552	217,315
Total unsettled area of subdivision,	662,354	664,732	662,728	663,965
TOTAL DISTRICT— Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	275,815	278,161	287,672	289,501
Held on ordinary tenures ...	239,698	242,044	251,566	253,372
Held revenue-free (lakhiraj) ...	5,070	5,070	5,070	5,071
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj).	31,047	31,047	31,036	31,058
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	136,857	137,928	138,118	141,560
Area of fee-simple and com- muted grants.	50,909	50,909	50,909	52,197
Area settled under other special rules.	293	293	293	923
Area settled on 30 years' lease	74,030	75,086	75,524	77,765
Area held under ordinary rules, or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	11,625	11,640	11,392	11,305
Total land settled under other ten- ures.	1,041	1,037	1,037	1,040
Total settled area of the district ...	413,713	417,126	426,827	432,101
Total unsettled area of the district	1,773,807	1,770,394	1,760,693	1,755,419

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tenures—(concl'd).

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TABLE XV A.

Total area and unsettled area in each tahsil and mauza in 1902-03.

	Total area.	Unsettled area.	Remarks.
	Sq. miles	Sq. miles.	
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.			
Tahsils—Chutia ...	471	369	Includes 82 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Tezpur ...	253	144	Includes 21 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Mauzas—Balipara ...	182	150	Includes 122 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Barchola ...	263	250	Includes 22 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Bargaon ...	139	120	
Behali ...	267	231	
Gohpur ...	214	199	
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION.			
Tahsils—Kalaigaon ...	248	161	
Mangaldai ...	176	123	
Patharughat ...	169	112	
Mauzas—Ambagaon ...	35	28	
Barsilajhar...	37	31	
Dalgaon ...	209	197	
Harisinga ...	26	19	
Jhaparabari...	63	35	Includes 10 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Orang ...	131	121	
Petuachubri ...	30	23	
Rangapani ...	52	49	
Sekh̄ar ...	131	97	Includes 11 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Silpota ...	18	12	
Sonaigaon ...	66	64	
Samabari ...	40	24	
Tinkoria ...	10	5	

TABLE

Ex-

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
TEZPUR SUBDIVISION—			
Number of opium shops ...	47	47	47
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	35,894	35,002	29,069
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	77 28 0	58 36 0	66 35 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	88,578	67,146	76,237
Number of ganja shops ...	8	8	9
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	8,914	8,429	7,967
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	12 11 8	10 12 0	15 16 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	4,416	3,708	5,544
Number of country spirit shops ...	11	11	11
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	57,094	50,083	47,626
Number of distilleries ...			
Amount of liquor issued ...			
Still head duty ... Rs.			
Number of retail shops ...			
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.			
Other heads of excise revenue ... Rs.	556	439	392
MANGALDAI SUBDIVISION—			
Number of opium shops ...	54	53	53
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	18,807	18,747	21,604
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	103 10 0	96 5 0	103 25 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	1,17,705	1,09,582	1,18,133
Number of ganja shops ...	3	3	3
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	2,166	1,892	1,894
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	3 16 0	3 19 0	3 20 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	1,229	1,251	1,260
Number of country spirit shops ...	5	5	5
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	7,339	8,504	8,340
Number of distilleries ...			
Amount of liquor issued ...			
Still-head duty ... Rs.			
Number of retail shops... ..			
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.			
Other heads of excise revenue ... Rs.	702	932	624
TOTAL DISTRICT.—			
Number of opium shops ...	101	100	100

TABLE XVI.

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XVI.
cis.

1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
47								
28,144								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
73 6 0								
83,391								
9								
9,110								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
17 6 0								
6,458								
11								
50,306								
422								
53								
21,548								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
108 18 0								
1,22,633								
3								
1,818								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
3 16 6								
1,263								
5								
8,127								
294								
100								

TABLE

Ex-

Principal heads.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.	64,501	53,749	50,673
		M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued	... ..	180 38 0	155 1 0	170 20 0
Duty on opium sold	 Rs.	2,06,283	1,76,728	1,94,370
Number of ganja shops...	...	11	11	12
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.	11,080	10,321	9,851
		M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued	...	15 27 8	13 31 0	18 36 0
Duty on ganja sold	 Rs.	5,645	4,959	6,804
Number of country spirit shops	...	16	16	16
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.	64,424	58,587	55,938
Number of distilleries	...			
Amount of liquor issued	...			
Still-head duty	 Rs.			
Number of retail shops	...			
Amount paid for licenses	... Rs.			
Other heads of excise revenue	... Rs.	1,348	1,431	1,016

XVI.

cise—(concl'd.)

1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
49,692								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
181 24 0								
2,07,024								
12								
10,928								
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
20 22 6								
7,722								
16								
58,433								
714								

TABLE XVII.
Income and expenditure of Local Boards.
Tezpur.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	13,512	22,772	Post office ...	733	1,086
Police ...	4,450	6,702	Administration ...	118	118
Tolls on ferries ...	1,189	582	Education ...	4,132	6,911
Contributions ...	21,098	24,000	Medical ...	2,827	4,706
Debt ...	...	472	Civil works ...	25,629	42,731
Miscellaneous ...	31	...	Debt ...	...	471
			Miscellaneous ...	2,045	887
Total ...	40,280	54,528	Total ...	35,484	56,910

Mangaldai.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	22,702	28,396	Post office ...	1,010	2,186
Police ...	2,298	2,683	Administration ...	120	124
Tol's on ferries ...	2,145	1,640	Education ...	5,008	7,274
Contributions ...	13,992	15,348	Medical ...	990	4,268
Debt ...	...	887	Civil works ...	23,900	37,358
Miscellaneous ...	834	103	Debt ...	...	14
			Miscellaneous ...	2,880	1,735
Total ...	41,971	49,057	Total ...	33,908	53,759

TABLE XVIII.

Municipal.

Tezpur Municipality.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1894-95.	1900-01.		1894-95.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	176	792	Administration ...	384	1,707
Tax on houses and lands.	546	2,302	Conservancy ...	2,861	5,501
Pounds ...	2,641	2,107	Public Works ...	2,624	6,322
Fees from markets ...	2,095	3,061	Public Instruction ..	135	422
Grants from Government and local funds.	3,000	5,000	Drainage ...	328	216
Conservancy ...	336	2,127	Other heads ...	3,757	4,229
Other sources ...	1,424	3,548	Closing balance ...	129	540
Total ...	10,218	18,937	Total ...	10,218	18,937

TABLE XIX.

Strength of Police Force.

Particulars.	1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.			
SUPERVISING STAFF.			
District and Assistant Superintendent ...	1	1	1
Inspectors ...	2	2	2
SUBORDINATE STAFF.			
Sub-Inspectors ...	6	6	11
Head Constables ...	15	21	21
Constables ...	93	136	204
Total expenditure ...	29,385	30,416	55,584

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.

As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XX.
Police Stations and Outposts in 1904.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.		SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
		Sub-Inspector.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
Tezpur Subdivision.	Behali P. S. ...	1	...	7	8
	Chutia P. S. ...	2	...	8	10
	Gohpur P. S. ...	1	...	5	6
	Tezpur P. S. ...	3	1	16	20
Mangaldai Subdivision.	Kalaigaon P. S. ..	1	...	7	8
	Kariapara O. P. ..	...	1	6	7
	Mangaldai P. S. ...	2	1	15	18
	Paneri P. S. ...	1	1	7	9

TABLE XXI.

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TABLE XXI.
Jail statistics.

Tezpur Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male ...	142	170	239
	{ Female ...	5	17	15
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	... ..	14	53	31
Expenditure on jail maintenance	... ..	Rs. 12,461	Rs. 14,437	Rs. 17,474
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	31	44	41
Profits on jail manufacture	... ..	6,771	3,745	2,830
Earnings per prisoner (a) ...	... ..	47	21	12

Mangaldai Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male ...	14	10	17
	{ Female ...	1	1	...
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	... ..	...	98	...
Expenditure on jail maintenance	... ..	Rs. 824	Rs. 1,057	Rs. 1,188
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	... ..	22	24	51
Profits on jail manufacture	... ..	1,332	259	94
Earnings per prisoner (a) ...	... ..	98	36	7

* On rations and clothing.

(a) Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XXII.
Education.

	1800-01.	1801-02.	1802-03.	1803-04.	1804-05.	1805-06.	1806-07.	1807-08.	1808-09.	1809-10.	1810-11.	1811-12.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.												
<i>High Schools.</i>												
Number ...	1	1	1	2								
Number of boys reading in High School classes.	34	47	47	54								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes.	60	67	63	62								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes.	134	139	132	291								
<i>Middle English Schools.</i>												
Number ...	1	1	1	...								
Number of boys reading in Middle School classes.	13	17	7	...								
Number of boys reading in Primary classes.	99	88	101	...								
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools.</i>												
Number ...	3	3	3	3								

TABLE XXII.

Number of boys reading in Middle School classes.	88	24	25	24
Number of boys reading in Primary classes.	226	218	186	214
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools.</i>				
Number	4	3	2	2
Number of boys reading in Upper Primary classes.	26	15	20	24
Number of boys reading in Lower Primary classes.	131	97	83	66
<i>Lower Primary Schools.</i>				
Number	143	134	129	134
Number of boys reading in three Upper classes.			1,386	1,502
Number of boys reading in Lower classes.	(a) 3,831	(a) 3,500	2,155	2,110
FEMALE EDUCATION				
Number of Girls' Schools	2	2	3	3
Number of girls' reading, (whether in Girls' or Boys' Schools) in High Schools.	...	..	...	...
Middle English Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Middle Vernacular Schools	...	...	...	...
Upper Primary Schools	1	...	...	...
Lower Primary Schools ...	106	116	144	195

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XXIII.
Educational Finance.

Particulars.	No. of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM—				Expenditure per head of scholar.
		Provincial reve- nues.	District and muni- cipal funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Training and Special Schools ...	5	699	1,227	...	684	2,610
<i>Secondary Boys' Schools:—</i>						
Upper (High) ...	1	1,764	...	4,016	...	5,780
Lower (Middle) ...	4	1,684	936	985	436	4,021
<i>Primary Boys' Schools.</i>						
Upper ...	4	...	480	111	405	986
Lower ...	143	...	9,190	884	688	10,743
Girls' Schools ...	2	...	598	51	194	888
Total	159	4,127	12,426	6,027	2,407	24,987
						Rs. a. p. 44 3 9 26 7 5 11 6 9 7 5 2 3 0 8 13 15 5 5 11 7

TABLE XXIV.
Medical.

Particulars.	TEZPUR SUBDIVISION.				MARGALDAI SUBDIVISION.				TOTAL DISTRICT.			
	1891.		1901.		1891.		1901.		1891.		1901.	
	1	1	4	1	1	1	6	2	2	2	10	
Number of dispensaries ...	569	1643	2220	634	523	1040	3260	2166	2166	2166	3260	
Daily average number of indoor patients ...	685	2601	13909	1537	1851	15092	29001	4452	4452	4452	29001	
Daily average number of outdoor patients ...	794	8041	22796	3194	4147	36987	59783	12191	12191	12191	59783	
Cases treated ...	36	149	227	140	94	280	487	243	243	243	487	
Operations performed ...	2072	7280	10390	1104	1425	10671	21061	8655	8655	8655	21061	
Total income ...	798	1383	2375	170	230	2371	4746	1613	1613	1613	4746	
Income from Government Rs. ...	298	1680	5246	24	250	4820	10066	1930	1930	1930	10066	
Income from Local and Municipal Funds ...	817	1134	667	735	456	402	1069	1552	1552	1552	1069	
Subscriptions ...	2072	7216	10351	1104	1393	10473	20824	8609	8609	8609	20824	
Total expenditure ...	1104	1873	2862	503	516	2527	5489	2389	2389	2389	5489	
Expenditure on establishment Rs. ...												
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated			Not available.	Do.	...	...	(a) 9.57	62.31	62.31	62.31	31.01	
Cost per case							0 1 10	0 1 10	0 1 10	0 1 10	0 3 7	

(a) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE
Dispen-

Name of Dispen- sary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Tezpur ...	4,892	11,315	5,639	10,776	3,859	11,474	4,169	12,196	3,150	14,510		
Chutia ...	3,886	8,037	1,877	8,748	1,237	9,321	1,291	9,502	1,178	8,745		
Mangaldai	3,659	10,368	3,093	10,520	2,191	10,556	2,042	14,104	1,835	15,550		
Sipnjar,	2,182	13,087	2,192	11,293	1,479	15,971	1,444	19,003	1,616	24,108		
Jaluli ...	1,441	9,746	1,531	9,560	1,046	9,107	1,191	9,252	1,047	10,421		
Panerihat	2,136	2,968	1,567	3,721	792	3,473	746	3,623	closed.			
Behali ...	...	...	2,328	1,698	2,618	6,091	1,102	7,029	858	6,62		
anibhoral removed to Bali- para in 1904 ...	...	...	507	1,574	1,616	3,711	829	4,321	1,001	4,770		
Kalaigaon	...	...	1,529	798	1,062	3,908	871	7,087	857	7,884		
Rangama- tighat...	...	...	560	1,295	584	5,770	776	9,014	1,146	10,467		
Gohpur ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2,502	4,007		

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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME VI.

NOWGONG.

BY

B. C. ALLEN, C.S.

Calcutta :
PRINTED BY THE CITY PRESS,
12, BENTINCK STREET.

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Nowgong lacks what is generally associated with works of this nature, *i.e.*, a directory. There is, however, only one town in the district, and that town has been described at length. The great bulk of the population live on tea gardens or in villages, which do not lend themselves to a detailed description, and a directory of these villages would be entirely out of place. Lists of all the tea gardens and of all villages that are centres of trade have, however, been appended to the volume, and reference has been made in the text to all villages which are noted for any special industry. It is hardly necessary to add that whenever the Province is referred to, it is to the old Province of Assam as constituted in 1904 that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner, Major Halliday, for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

SHILLONG :
September, 1905. }

B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General appearance—Mountain system—River system—Marshes—Geology—Climate—Fauna.

The district of Nowgong is situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in the Assam Valley and derives its name from its principal town (Noa-gao the new village). It covers an area of 3,843 square miles, and lies between 25°36' and 26°42' N. and 91°57' and 93°45' E. On the north it is bounded by the Brahmaputra; on the east by Sibsagar; on the south by the Naga, North Cachar, and Jaintia Hills; and on the west by the Khasi and Jaintia Hills and Kamrup. Area and boundaries.

The greater part of the district is a level plain, intersected with numerous rivers and water courses, and dotted over with *bils* and marshes. In places this plain is fairly densely peopled, and the banks of the Kalang are lined with villages; but near the Brahmaputra the country is liable to inundation in the rainy season, and there are wide stretches of waste land covered with reeds and grass. On the north-east, the Mikir Hills impinge upon the plain, and a considerable tract of hilly country is included in the boundaries of the district. On the south-east, there is the broad but sparsely peopled valley of the Kapili, the valley of it's General appearance

tributary the Langpher which makes its way between the Mikir Hills and the hills of North Cachar, and the upper valley of the Dhansiri, which is bounded on either side by hills. On the west, the outlying spurs of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills project into the plain. Nowgong might thus be roughly described as a tract of level country bounded on the north by the Brahmaputra, and surrounded on the three remaining sides by hills.

Across the centre of this plain stretches a belt of cultivated land from Silghat on the north-east to Jagi in the south-west; but on either side of this belt cultivation falls off, and there are wide expanses of grass land on the north and west, and of forest and hill on the south and east. The general appearance of the district is extremely picturesque. On a clear day in winter the view to the north is bounded by the blue ranges of the outer Himalayas, behind which snowy peaks glisten brightly in the sun; while to the south and east lie range upon range of lower hills whose sides are clothed with the luxuriant vegetation of a tropical forest. The level rice fields, after the crop has been carried and stubble alone remains, might perhaps seem tame and uninteresting, were it not for the groves of slender palms and feathery bamboos with which they are broken up. During the rains this portion of the district is covered with a rich green carpet which gradually turns to gold, and on every side are swamps and rivers, hills and woods, to lend variety to the scene.

The māuzas fringing the Brahmaputra are deeply flooded in the rains and are for the most part covered with reeds, such as khagari (*saccharum spontaneum*), ikra (*saccharum arundinaceum*), and nal (*phragmites roxburghii*) which are from ten to twenty feet in height. The greater part of this tract lies too low for the growth of any trees except the simul (*bombax malabaricum*) which is dotted here and there over the surface of the plain. Nepali graziers keep large herds of buffaloes on the *churs* or sandbanks which are continually being formed by the Brahmaputra, and in the cold weather the villagers cut and burn the jungle, and sow mustard or summer rice in fields surrounded with a wall of reeds. These fields are described by the people as their *pams*. Their regular homes are often situated many miles away, near the land on which they grow transplanted rice; but at the commencement of the cold weather they move down to the *chapari* and live in little huts of grass during the time that ploughing and sowing is going on. Sometimes they return home while the crop is growing, and only revisit the *pam* to cut and thresh the harvest; sometimes they remain on during the whole cold weather. The mustard fields are dotted about, bright patches of vivid yellow in the dense green jungle, and come as a pleasant change to the inspecting officer who has generally reached them through footpaths, which are almost tunnels, shut in on either side by an impenetrable wall of grass and reeds. There is a pleasant feeling of freshness on these riparian flats on a foggy winter's morning. The soil is light and

springy, the partridges are to be heard calling in the jungle, the mustard when in flower has a strong but pleasant smell, and there is a general sense of freedom and an absence of restraint.

**The
southern
maunas.**

South of the Kapili, between Dharamtul and the hills, much of the country is again below flood level, and is covered with high grass jungle interspersed with *dolonis*, or marshes covered with the most luxuriant fodder grass, in which the cattle graze knee deep in the cold weather. The valley of the Kapili beyond Jamunamukh is very sparsely peopled. Part of this tract is marshy, part is rolling savannah, which supports a stunted growth of thatching grass and is almost destitute of trees. Further east, the valley of the Langpher is covered with dense tree forest. This forest covers the whole of the upper valley of the Dhansiri between the Mikir and the Naga Hills, and, prior to the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, acted as a most complete and effectual barrier to all intercourse between the southern corners of Sibsagar and Nowgong. For fully ninety miles the railway runs through a pathless wilderness of trees, a desolate and malarious tract shut in by hills on either side; but east of Dimapur this dismal forest is included in the district of Sibsagar, and thus only a portion, though perhaps the larger portion, falls within the boundaries of Nowgong.

**Mountain
system.**

The two main mountain systems of the district are the Mikir Hills on the north and east; and, on the south and west, the outlying spurs which project from the Assam Range into the Brahmaputra Valley. The

Mikir Hills cover an area about 60 miles in length and 35 in breadth, but the greater portion of this tract lies in the neighbouring district of Sibsagar. Their western spurs from Kuthari to Dabaka are situated in Nowgong, and the hills that lie south of the Mohandiju and Jamuna rivers also fall within the boundaries of the district. They rise steeply from the narrow valleys with which they are intersected, and hill and valley alike are covered with dense tree forest, except in places where they have been cleared for the shifting cultivation of the Mikir tribe. The tops of the ranges in Nowgong average from one to two thousand feet in height, but Bar Kandali, the highest peak in the district, is nearly 3,000 feet above the level of the sea. These hills support a scanty population who grow dry rice, vegetables, and cotton on their slopes, and are seldom visited by the natives of the plains. The out-lying spurs of the Assam Range are somewhat lower, and the highest peak is Lusuri in Duar Amla mauza (2,400 feet). In appearance and general characteristics they do not differ materially from the Mikir Hills.

Apart from the two main systems there are numerous isolated hills dotted over the surface of the plain. Near Silghat there are two, one called Kamakhya and the other Hathimur, which overhang the Brahmaputra. On Kamakhya, whose summit is 800 feet above the sea, there is a temple sacred to Durga, where sacrifices are still offered to the goddess. A similar shrine on Hathimur is now neglected and has fallen into disrepair. Jamunamukh and Garubat are two mauzas

lying near the junction of the Kapili and the Jamuna, between the Mikir and the Khasi Hills, and here, as is only natural, a few outlying hills are found. One of these, named Madhpur, is a site for local worship, while on another, called Modartali, are the remains of a temple erected in honour of the goddess Kamala. Further west the level of the Kapili valley is unbroken, but in the Raha tahsil there are a few low hills, on one of which, Bashundori, there is an image of the goddess of that name and two of Gonesh. The south of Gobha is entirely hilly country, and on one of the peaks, called Deosal, there is a temple sacred to Mahadeo. Even in Tetelia mauza, north of the Kalang, there is a hill nearly 1,000 feet in height, and in Mayang, which is bounded on one side by the Brahmaputra, are two hills, Boha and Mayang, sacred to Gonesh. East of Ghugua, the country is a broad alluvial plain whose even surface is unbroken by the smallest elevation till the hills at Silghat rise above the horizon.

**River
system :
the Brahma-
putra.**

The principal river of Nowgong is the Brahmaputra, which flows along the whole of the northern boundary, and it is into the Brahmaputra that all the drainage of the district ultimately finds its way.

In this portion of its course the Brahmaputra displays in a pronounced degree the special characteristics by which it is distinguished in Assam. It oscillates from side to side of the sandy strath or valley through which it makes its way, and seldom follows the same course for many years. Its waters are surcharged with matter in suspension, and a snag or other slight obstruction in

the channel is liable to give rise to an almond shaped sandbank. The next flood may wash this bank away, or it may only serve to increase its size, and in a surprisingly short space of time a considerable island is formed covered with reeds and grass. Numerous backwaters and minor channels take off from the main stream, only to rejoin it a few miles lower down, and it is not merely one great drainage channel, but a regular system of streams surrounding and depending on the parent river. These streams enclose great *churs* and islands covered with elephant grass and reeds, and in the cold weather there is generally a foreshore of hot and glaring sand. In the rains these channels are full of water, and in places the river is several miles across. Even this great expanse is not enough to contain its waters, and in times of flood the river spreads over the low land at the side. At Silghat and Tezpur there are rocks and hills to give permanence to the channel, and west of Tezpur and near Bishnath the high bank comes right down to the water's edge, but, as a rule, the Brahmaputra is fringed with swamps and marshes, covered with high grass and reeds.

Duar Bagari and the eastern portion of Duar Salana, in the north-east corner of the district, are drained by the Diphlu, the Gatonga, and its tributary the Deopani. About eight miles north-east of Silghat the Kalang takes off from the Brahmaputra, and after flowing a tortuous course through the centre of the district past Nowgong, Raha, and Jagi, rejoins that river at Kajalimukh about 15 miles above Gauhati. The Kalang receives the drainage of the north western slopes of the Mikir Hills

Other rivers
The Kalang.

in the Misa and Diyu which join it in the upper portion of its course. Further south, the drainage of these hills is collected in the Nanai or Hari, which flows for some distance parallel to the Kalang and finally falls into it at Raha. Here, too, it is connected by a channel with the Kapili, which brings to it the drainage of North Cachar and the eastern slopes of the Jaintia Hills; but the main stream of that river turns to the west, and, after receiving the Barpani and the Umiam or Kiling from the Jaintia and Khasi Hills, falls into the Kalang at Jagi. A little to the west of Jagi, the Kalang forms the boundary between the districts of Kamrup and Nowgong, and not far from its junction with the parent stream receives the Digru on its left bank. The total length of the Kalang is 73 miles, and, by acting as a receiver for the Brahmaputra, it fills a most important place in the drainage system of the district. The current is somewhat sluggish, the bed of the river soft and muddy, and the banks are steep and high. Between Samagurihat and Raha they are covered with a continuous line of villages, and between Raha and Jagi the river flows as a rule between villages or rice fields, but from Jagi to its' mouth it passes through waste and jungle land. During the rains it is navigable throughout its length by a boat of four tons burthen, and small steamers go down it from Silghat as far as Nowgong station. In the dry season the flow of water from the Brahmaputra is stopped by a sand-bank which has formed near Silghat, and above Jagi the river can be crossed on foot, and is thus little used for navigation. During the rains ferries are maintained

at Jagi, Raha, Nowgong and Kuwarital, but at the last three places temporary bridges are erected when the water falls. The country between the Kalang and the Brahmaputra is drained by a large number of *jans* or water courses flowing a tortuous and sluggish course between high banks parallel to the main river. They form a network of intricate channels which here and there widen out into *bils* or swamps, the largest of which are known as the Leteri and Sonai.

The Kapili rises in the Jaintia Hills and enters the **The Kapili.** Nowgong district at Panimur. From here it flows a north north-westerly course till a little below its confluence with the Jamuna, where it takes a turn to the west and flows past Raha. Here it is connected by a branch channel with the Kalang, but it is not till Jagi is reached that it finally falls into that stream after a course of 163 miles. The principal tributaries of the Kapili on the right bank are the Doiang which joins it at Panimur, the Lankajan, and the Jamuna which is swelled by the following streams, the Dimoru, the Dighalpani, the Horgati and the Buriganga. On the left bank the Kapili receives the Kolanga, the Barpani, and the Umiam or Kiling, the two latter being themselves considerable rivers. Just below its junction with the Umiam it is crossed by the railway on a brick bridge no less than 500 yards in length, but this bridge is much in excess of the width of the river, when flowing between its permanent banks. During the rains it is navigable by a boat of four tons burden as far as Panimur, but a vessel of this size could not get much above Kampur in the dry

season. The river is largely used as a trade route, and affords an outlet to mustard grown in the plains, and to cotton, lac, cocoons, and timber from the hills.

Marshes.

Nowgong is dotted all over with *bils* and marshes, many of which have formed in the beds of rivers which have changed their courses. Altogether there are some 57 *bils* or marshes which are sold as public fisheries, and more than one hundred which are used by the villagers for this purpose but are allowed to remain untaxed. These marshes are especially numerous in the *chapari* or low land near the Brahmaputra, but none are of conspicuous size or importance. The largest are, perhaps, the Mora Kalang and the Kachudhara, which have formed in the old bed of the Kalang, the Lalung *bil* in the Namati mauza, the Goukhajua *bil* in Mikirbheta mauza, the Garanga and Pakaria in Mayang mauza, the Udari Khanagaria in Ghugua mauza, and the Haribhanga *bil* near Laokhoa opposite Tezpur. During the cold weather these *bils* are very pleasant places. The water lies in the centre of the depression and is surrounded by a belt of the most luxurious fodder grass, which is again enclosed by a wall of reeds, some ten or twelve feet high. These marshes generally teem with fish, and are the haunt of birds of every kind ranging in size from the crane, pelican, or fish eagle to the snippet and the small blue kingfisher. In the wilder parts of the district the sportsman on breaking through the encircling wall of jungle, may come upon a wild pig rooting for his food, or a herd of buffalo standing knee deep in the rich pasture or wallowing in

the shallow water near the edge ; while sometimes, if the fates are unusually kind, he may find, as the sun is setting, a large rhinoceros taking his evening drink.

Bils that have formed in the beds of rivers that have changed their courses are of a different character. The banks are high, and are often overgrown with trees, and the *bil* is long and narrow and often fairly deep.

The soil of the plain is of alluvial origin and consists **Geology.** of a mixture of clay and sand in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand on the banks of the Brahmaputra to a stiff clay which is quite unfit for cultivation. Little is known about the southern slopes of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, but they are said to be of gneissic origin. The Mikir Hills were examined by an officer of the Geological Survey Department in the winter of 1896-97. Nearly the whole of the north Mikir Hills are composed of massive gneiss or foliated granite, but to the south there are only two exposures of this rock.* The hills west of Lumding, and between Dimapur and Mohandiju consist of finely bedded grey clay shales, which, north of Lumding, have been covered with sandstone beds. A mottled earthy trap is often found at the junction of the gneiss and the sedimentary rocks, but there is a remarkable absence of trap dykes in the gneissic area. Deposits of limestone are found at Panimur and near the Jamuna river, but are unfortunately somewhat inaccessible and have not yet been worked. Salt is found in the Mikir Hills at Jangthang and there

* The hills lying north of the Daigrung do not seem to have been included in this officer's enquiries.

are traces of petroleum in the neighbourhood of Lumding. Iron ore is also of wide spread occurrence in the southern Mikir Hills. There are great quantities of ferruginous sandstone passing locally into sandy haematite and haematitic conglomerate, but there seem to be few places where it is sufficiently concentrated to make a workable ore. Coal is found, amongst other places, on the Langlei hill and near the mouth of the Diphu river. The latter deposit gives an analysis of 40 per cent. of carbon and is the best coal found, in the Mikir Hills, but the thinness of the seam, coupled with the fact that it is under water during half the year, deprives it of any value. The Langlei seam consists of twelve feet of visible coal, but it is of very poor quality with a low percentage of fixed carbon and a high percentage of ash. It is only twelve miles as the crow flies from Lumding, but is much more inaccessible than this figure would suggest, as the intervening country is covered with dense jungle and broken up with deep watercourses and ravines. For further particulars with regard to the geology of the Mikir Hills reference should be made to *Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India*, vol. xxviii, part 1, pages 71-95.

Climate.

The climate of Nowgong does not differ materially from that of the rest of Assam Proper. From the middle of November till the end of February the weather is all that could be desired. The total rainfall during this period is only about two inches, the sky is clear, the sun though bright has little power, and the air is cool and pleasant. Fogs sometimes hung over

the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra, but even fogs are not an unmitigated evil, as by diminishing the period during which the earth is exposed to the influence of the sun's rays, they help to keep the country cool. In March the temperature begins to rise, but the copious showers of April, when from five to six inches of rain fall, effectually prevent the development of anything in any way resembling the hot weather of Upper India. Between May and September the rainfall is fairly heavy, the air becomes surcharged with moisture, and the damp heat is trying alike to Europeans and to natives. It is seldom that the thermometer rises above 90°. Fahrenheit, but, in an excessively humid atmosphere like that of Nowgong, even such a moderate degree of heat has a relaxing effect upon the constitution. In October, the temperature begins to fall and the nights are fairly cool, but the winter does not actually set in till the middle of November. Table I shows the average monthly rainfall at certain selected stations. Over the greater portion of the plains the average fall is about 75 inches in the year, but in the Kapili valley it is considerably less, and at Lanka it is only 42 inches—a rainfall which is phenomenally low for the Province of Assam.

Nowgong is seldom visited by violent and destructive storms, though an interval of dry weather in the rainy season is often closed by a thunder shower, which is extremely welcome as it at once relieves the oppressiveness of the atmosphere. Hailstorms occasionally do damage, especially to tea gardens, but are very local

storm, floods
and
earthquakes.

in their sphere of action. The harvest is often injured by the floods of the Kapili and the Brahmaputra, and this subject will be discussed at greater length in the section on agriculture. The district, like the rest of Assam, has always been subject to earthquakes and suffered severely in the great visitation of June 12th 1897. The circuit house, court house, and Deputy Commissioner's bungalow were rendered unfit for habitation, parts of the jail wall collapsed, and the metalled road along the side of the Kalang was split up with yawning fissures. Some damage was also done to masonry buildings in the district, but fortunately the loss of life was very small, and only three deaths were actually attributed to the earthquake.

Fauna.

Wild animals are fairly common and include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig, and different kinds of deer of which the principal varieties are sambar (*cervus unicolor*), barasingha (*cervus duvauceli*), hog-deer (*cervus porcinus*), and barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills, and, when the crops are ripening do much damage unless the numbers of the herds are regularly kept down. For this purpose the district is divided into 6 *mahals* or tracts. The right to hunt in each *mahal* is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well trained elephants pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most

arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. From 80 to 100 *kunkis* are generally employed, only a small proportion of which are the property of the actual *mahaldar*. The arrangement generally made is that the *mahaldar* pays the price of the *mahal*, and that he receives from his partners one fourth of the elephants they capture. The royalty on each elephant is paid by the person who will receive the price when the animal is sold. 38 elephants were caught in 1897-98 the last year in which the *mahals* were sold by the Deputy Commissioner.

Rhinoceros live in the swamps that fringe the Brahmaputra and are now becoming very scarce. They breed slowly, and as the horn is worth more than its

weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. Recently 40 square miles of uninhabited jungle land near Laokhoa have been reserved and constituted a sanctuary for game, and a proposal to form a similar reserve of 37 square miles near Dimaru is under consideration. Herds of wild buffalo are also found near the Brahmaputra, and wild bulls often serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese on the river *churs*. Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in almost every part of the district. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1903, are said to have accounted for over one thousand head of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows—elephant 1, tigers 6, bears 2, wild buffaloes 4, wild pigs 2, snakes 9, total 24. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 27 tigers, 23 leopards, and 18 bears.

Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, pheasants, jungle fowl, and hares.

CHAPTER II. HISTORY.

Summary—The Kingdom of Kamarupa—Visit of Hiuen Tsiang—Jangal Balahu—Nowgong copper plate—The Kachari kingdom—Wars between Ahoms and Kacharis—The Koch Kings—Koch and Muhammadan invasions—The Ahom Kings—The Moamaria insurrection—Annexation of Assam by the British—Ahom Government and social life—Condition of country in 1824—Changes in district boundaries—The Phulaguri riot—Archaeological remains—Chronological Table.

It is doubtful whether at any period the whole of the country which is now known as the district of Nowgong was a separate polity under its own ruler, and its history has to be considered in connection with that of the various states of which from time to time it formed a part. It was originally included in the ancient Hindu kingdom of Kamarupa, which is mentioned in the Mahabharata, and which at one time occupied North Eastern Bengal, and a great part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. About the tenth century A. D. the northern portion of the district seems to have formed part of the territories of a powerful and civilized line of Pala kings. But even at that date Kachari princes were ruling in the Kapili valley, and, though they were conquered by the Ahoms in the sixteenth century, they continued to hold this

Summary.

portion of the district as feudatory chiefs, till it passed into our hands with the rest of Assam in 1826. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the northern part of Nowgong began to pass into the sphere of Ahom influence, though, for a time at any rate, it was overrun by the Koches and Muhammadans, and it was not till about 1685, A. D. that the Ahoms finally expelled the Musalmans from Kamrup, and established their rule over the five upper districts of the Assam Valley.

The king-
dom of
Kamarupa,
1900 B. C.—
1000 A. D.

According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the kingdom of Kamarupa extended from the Karatoya river on the western boundaries of Rangpur to the Dikrai in the east of the Darrang district. It was divided into four portions, *i. e.*, Kamapith from the Karatoya to the Sankosh, Ratnapith from the Sankosh to the Rupahi, Suvarnapith from the Rupahi to the Bhareli, and Saumarapith from the Bhareli to the Dikrai. The earliest king of Kamarupa of whom anything in particular is recorded is Narak, who is said to have been the son of the earth by Vishnu, and who defeated and slew his predecessor Ghatak.* He established his capital at Pragjyotishpura, the modern Gauhati, and seems to have been a powerful and prosperous, though somewhat headstrong prince. He was appointed the guardian of Kamakhya, and his name still lives amongst the people as the builder of the causeway up the southern face of the hill Nilachal, on which the temple of Kamakhya

* An account of the early kings of Kamarupa will be found in the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, C.S., published in J. A. S. B., Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4, 1893.

stands. His power and presumption were such that he asked Kamakhya to marry him, and the goddess consented, on the understanding that he would construct for her a temple, a road, and a tank in a single night. He was on the point of completing this task, when Kamakhya made a cock crow before the usual hour, and the place about eight miles north of Gauhati,* at which Narak in his rage killed the cock, is still known as Kukurakata (the place where the cock was killed). He was succeeded by his son Bhagadatta, who is mentioned in the Mahabharata as fighting on the side of the Kauravas at the great battle of Kurukshetra, and we thus seem justified in assuming that fully a thousand years before Christ, Nowgong formed part of a powerful kingdom ruled by a line of non-Aryan princes.

Further information with regard to the rulers of Kamarupa is given in certain copper plates, which on palæographical grounds have been assigned to the eleventh century A. D.† These plates are valuable evidence as to the state of the country at the time at which they were engraved, but their account of the genealogy of the reigning king must obviously be received with some degree of caution. The dynasty of Narak is said to have been displaced by Cala Stambha, a Mleccha or foreign conqueror, whose line ended in the person of Sri Harisa, and was succeeded by another family of foreign princes, the first of whom was Pralambha and

* A hill near Silghat is also called Kukurakata for the same cause.

† For a description of these plates see J. A. S. B., Vol. LXVI. pp. 113 and 285, and Vol. LXVII, Part I, No. 1, p. 99.

the last Tyaga Singh. The dynasty of Narak was then restored in the person of Brahmapala. The invasion of the Mlecchas and their subsequent expulsion not improbably corresponds with the great irruption of the Bodos, who, according to their own traditions were at one time ruling at Gauhati and were subsequently driven eastwards to Dimapur, but the whole of this period is involved in great obscurity.

The visit of
Hiuen
Tsiang, 640
A. D.

In 640 A. D. Hiuen Tsiang visited Assam, and the record of his travels affords a momentary glimpse of the conditions of the country, a glimpse which is not unlike the view afforded by a flash of lightning on a dark and stormy night. The landscape, which has been shrouded in impenetrable gloom, is suddenly disclosed to view, and with equal rapidity is engulfed again in the blackest darkness; and nothing definite is known of the fortunes of Assam and its inhabitants, either immediately before or after the visit of the great Chinese traveller. The country seems to have advanced some distance on the path of civilization. The soil was deep and fertile, the towns surrounded by moats, the people fierce in appearance but upright and studious. Hinduism was the national religion, and, though Buddhism was not prohibited, its milder tenets had comparatively few followers.

Jangal
Balahu

A prince whose name is still remembered in Nowgong is Jangal Balahu. His father was the famous Arimatta, the son of a queen of Pratappur who was handed over to the embraces of the Brahmaputra, and who was sent by his mother to live on the south bank of that river.

He became a powerful king, unwittingly slew his putative father, and was in his turn accidentally killed by his son Jangal.* But this is only one of several versions of the story of Arimatta, and even the date at which he lived is most uncertain, one account referring him to the eighth and another to the thirteenth century A. D. Jangal's capital was in the Sahari mauza, about two miles west of Raha, where the remains of considerable earthworks, which are said to have surrounded his palace, are to be seen even at the present day. He was engaged in constant feuds with the Kacharis, by whom he was finally defeated and killed. Several places situated on the Kalang are said to derive their names from incidents in his flight. At Raha he stopped to drink, at Jagi he appeared above the water as he was being carried down by the current, and at Kajalimukh, at the junction of the Kalang and the Brahmaputra, he died, pierced by a *kajali* bamboo.†

Arimatta and Jangal Balahu are but the heroes of popular tradition, and the legends that surround their names are of little historical importance. More light is thrown upon the internal conditions of Nowgong a thousand years ago, by the inscriptions on a copper plate which was dug up on the banks of the Kalang opposite Puranigudam, and which on palæographical grounds has been assigned to the latter end of the tenth

The Now-gong copper plate.

* A fuller account of Arimatta will be found in the Gazetteer of the Darrang district.

† *Vide* an interesting account of the Koch Kings of Kamarupa by Mr. E. A. Gait, c.s., J. A. S. B. Vol. LXII, Part I, No. 4 of 1893.

century A. D.† It records the grant of a piece of land to a Brahman by a king called Balavarman, who lived in the camp of Haruppesvara near the Brahmaputra river. Little is said of the king's capital, and the author of the plate sounds a more modest note than the scribe who on the Bargaon plate recounts the glories of Ratnapala the ruler of Durjaya (probably modern Tezpur.) There are, however, no remains in Nowgong to suggest that it ever at any time contained the capital of a really powerful prince, and possibly Balavarman was only a minor Raja of no great wealth or influence. The inscription on the plate suggests, however, that Nowgong was administered by a well organised and civilized government, much in advance of anything that could be evolved by the aboriginal tribes that at present form so large a proportion of the population, though possibly not superior to the Ahom administration before it was destroyed by rebellion from within and invasion from without. Notification of the grant is issued to "the Brahmans and other castes, headed by the district revenue officials and their clerks," and the easements to which the grantee was entitled are described in full detail. The land was confirmed to him "with its houses, paddy fields, dry land, water, cattle pastures, refuse land, etc." All persons were prohibited from trespass, including "eunuchs, grand ladies, and any other person that may cause trouble on account of the fastening of elephants, the fastening of boats, the searching for thieves,* * * the realising of tenants' taxes

† For a full account of this plate see J. A. S. B., Vol LXVI, Part I, No. 4 p. 285.

and imposts, and the providing of room for the royal umbrella." It is possible that these precise injunctions were merely borrowed from the formulæ employed for grants of this description in the great kingdoms of the west, but if they had any application to the conditions actually existing at the time, it is evident that the Nowgong of the tenth century was very different from the Nowgong from which the British expelled the Burmese in 1825.

The plate is valuable as throwing some light upon the conditions of Nowgong, but it tells us but little of the history of the district. At the time at which it was engraved the Kacharis were in all probability an important power, at any rate in the Kapili valley, and some account must now be given of the origin and development of the Kachari kingdom.

The Kacharis or Bara, (mispronounced Bodo) as they call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found not only in the Brahamaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tipperah south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and the Hoang-ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. This theory has much to recommend it though, as a matter of fact, apart from the southward movement of the Miris and Chutiyas, most of the tribal migrations of which we have actual knowledge have been from

The Kachari Kingdom.

Origin of Kacharis.

the south towards the north. This was the direction of the Ahom invasion in the thirteenth century, the traditions of the Nagas all represent them as coming from the south, and the northward movement of the Kuki tribes was only stopped by the intervention of the British Government. On the other hand, Mr. Dundas quotes a prayer used by the Dimasa, or Kacharis of the North Cachar Hills, which supports the view that the tribe came from the north-east. It refers to a huge peepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali and finally settled in Dimapur. It has been already suggested that the Mleccha chief who overthrew the line of Narak may have been the Kachari king, and it is not unlikely that when driven from Gauhati they should have retreated to the valley of the Dhansiri and have established their capital at Dimapur. It was possibly at this time that the race who are somewhat loosely denominated Kachari split up into two sections, and it seems doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang no doubt from the same stock, but there

is no evidence to show that the Kacharis of Darrang were ever subjects of the historical Kachari kingdom, or that they are more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar than are the Rabhas and Lalungs, who are also members of the Bodo race. Even in Nowgong there is a marked distinction between the two sections of the tribe. The Kacharis of north Nowgong are Bodos, while those in the south are called Hojai Kacharis and are akin to the Dimasa.

The following legend which is prevalent amongst the Dimasa, would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Darrang. "Long ago the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground but after a time further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair the king resolved to fight again on the following day, but in the night a god appeared to him and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety."

**Kachari
remains in
Kapili
valley.**

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, when the Ahoms first made their appearance in the Assam Valley, the Kacharis seem to have been a powerful tribe occupying the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kapili and ruling over the western portion of Sibsagar and the southern and eastern portions of Nowgong. The remains of their capital at Dimapur * clearly show that they had advanced a considerable distance on the path of civilization. It is now buried in dense tree jungle, and the tract of land lying between the Mikir Hills and the Assam Range, which was formerly part of the Kachari kingdom, is a howling wilderness almost destitute of inhabitants, but it was apparently not so sparsely peopled some centuries ago. The upper portion of the Kapili valley is now the site of a few scattered hamlets of Mikirs and Kacharis, but the ruins of tanks, some of them of considerable size, are to be seen on every side. Even more interesting remains are to be found near the Jurijan, a little to the south of Jamumamukh, in the shape of a fort and three temples built of large blocks of stone and adorned with bas-reliefs and carvings. It must, however, be borne in mind that native rulers often constructed works of considerable size, more for self-glorification than from any idea that they would serve a useful purpose, and it would not be safe to infer that the population was actually as dense as the number and size of the drinking tanks might at first suggest. An army which was sent by Rudra Singh up the Kapili

* Dimapur is situated on the Dhansiri on the western borders of Sibsagar. An account of the ruins will be found in the Gazetteer of that district.

valley in 1706 A.D., seems to have advanced but slowly, and the path had apparently to be cleared through jungle. Five days were consumed in the journey from Jamuna fort to Tetelikhara *chauki*, a distance of six miles, and there is nothing in the Ahom chronicles to suggest that this part of the country was ever densely peopled in the sense in which that term is usually understood in India.

The first collision between the Ahoms and the ^{Wars} Kacharis occurred in 1490 A.D., when the Ahom king ^{between} Suhangpha was defeated and driven across the Dikho. ^{Ahoms and} ~~Kacharis.~~ The fact that the battle was fought in the eastern part of the Sibsagar district, affords some indication of the power of the Kacharis at the end of the fifteenth century and the distance at which they could make their influence felt. Their successes were not, however, of long duration. War soon broke out again, and in 1536 A.D. the Ahoms advanced up the Dhansiri, killed the Kachari king Detsung, and sacked his capital at Dimapur. From this time forward the Kachari princes occupied the position of feudatory chiefs. Their capital was removed first to Maibang in the North Cachar Hills, and afterwards to Khaspur on the southern side of the Barail, and their subsequent history will be found in the Gazetteer of the Cachar district. It is, however, clear that in his tributary capacity the Kachari king held the valley of the Kapili, till it was finally annexed by the British in 1826 A.D. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, during the reign of Kamaleswar Singh, the Kacharis and Moamaris attacked

the Ahoms near Raha, and the Kapili valley even at that time was described as Kachari territory.*

**The Koch
kings. Viswa
Singh, 1500—
1534.**

But, whatever may have been the fate of the Kapili valley, the northern portion of Nowgong came, for a time at any rate, under the Koch kings of Kamarupa. The founder of the Koch kingdom was a Mech named Viswa Singh, who is said to have been the son of Hira, the wife of one Haria Mandal, by Siva, who assumed the shape of her husband, and thus induced her to admit him to her embraces. Viswa Singh subdued the petty princes who surrounded him, founded a magnificent city in Kuch Bihar, and reduced his state to order. He is said to have marched against the Ahoms, but to have abandoned the expedition owing to the collapse of his commissariat; but the Ahom version, which states that he was defeated and made tributary, seems a more probable explanation of the failure of the expedition.

**Nar Narayan.
Jan. 1534—
1584 A. D.**

Viswa Singh died after a reign of 25 years, and was succeeded in 1534 A.D., by his son Malla Deva who assumed the name of Nar Narayan. The reign of this prince represents the zenith of the Koch power, and his armies, which were led by his brother Sukladwaj or Silarai, met with almost unvarying success. He first attacked the Ahoms, but, mindful of his father's failure, commenced his operations by building a great military road along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, and constructing tanks at regular intervals along it.

* The Ahom general was named Haripod Deka Phukan, and his grand children are still alive. As a reward the general was granted an estate of 8,000 *bighas* which is situated in the Mikirbheta mauza.

The work was entrusted to his brother, Gohain Kamala, and the road, much of which is still in existence, bears the name of Gohain Kamala Ali to the present day. Nar Narayan entered the Ahom capital Gargaon (the modern Nazira), and did not leave till he had received the submission of the Ahom king. The Kachari Raja and the Raja of Manipur were then reduced to the position of feudatory chiefs, and the kings of Jaintia, Tippera, and Sylhet conquered and slain. Further successes were obtained over the rulers of Khairam and Dimuria, but the tide of fortune turned when an attack was made on the kingdom of Gaur. The Koch army was routed and Silarai himself made prisoner. Nar Narayan would not, however, accept this defeat as final, and a few years later joined with the Emperor Akbar in a second attack upon the Pasha of Gaur. This enterprise was crowned with success, and Gaur was divided between the Emperor of Delhi and the Koch king. But the power of the Koches declined as rapidly as it had risen, and, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, Nowgong was harried by the wars between the Muhammadans and the Ahoms, who were supporting Bali Narayan the eastern representative of Nar Narayan's line. The story of the Koch kings is told in greater detail in the Darrang Gazetteer, but here it would be out of place as they had little connection with Nowgong, and it is now time to turn to the Ahoms who preceded the British in the sovereignty of the district.

The Ahoms were a Shan tribe from the kingdom of The Ahoms. Pong in the upper valley of the Irawadi, who, at the

beginning of the 13th century, crossed the Patkai and settled in the south of the territory which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The country at the foot of the hills was occupied by tribes of Morans and Borahis, whom they easily subdued, and who were absorbed by inter-marriage with their conquerors. But to the west and north they were confronted by far more powerful nations. Upper Assam was ruled by the Chutiyas, a tribe of Bodo origin, who are believed to have entered the valley from the north-east, and to have conquered the Hindu Pala kings whom they found in possession of the country. On the west there was the strong Kachari kingdom with its capital at Dimapur. In the first half of the fourteenth century the Ahoms became involved in war with the Chutiyas, but their final victory did not come till 1523 A. D., when the Chutiya king was defeated and his country annexed by Suhunmung, the "Dihingia Raja," who reigned from 1497-1539 A. D. The defeat of the Kacharis and the sack of Dimapur in 1536 has already been described in the preceding paragraphs.

**Koch and
Muham-
madan
invasions.**

The Ahoms were now supreme in Upper Assam, but were still exposed to danger from the Koch and Muhammadan powers in the west. In 1532, they defeated with great slaughter a Muhammadan invader named Turbuk on the banks of the Bhareli river, but a few years later they were conquered by the Koch king, Nar Narayan, who occupied their capital Gargaon, the modern Nazira, and exacted tribute from the Ahom prince.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were again involved in war with the Muhammadans, as their king Pratap Singh declined to surrender Bali Narayan, the Koch prince, who had fled to him for protection, and who sagaciously pointed out that in their own interests it was most desirable that they should maintain a buffer state between themselves and the Muhammadans. Most of the fighting took place in Lower Assam, but in 1615 A. D., a Musalman army under Satrajit advanced as far as the Bhareli, to avenge a Muhammadan trader, who had been put to death by the Ahom king. The Muhammadans, though at first successful, were subsequently defeated both on land and water with great slaughter.

The war then dragged on in Lower Assam, but in 1637 A. D., on the death of Bali Narayan, the Bar Nadi, which at present forms the western boundary of Darrang, was fixed as the frontier between Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms took advantage of the confusion that ensued on the deposition of Shah Jehan to extend their arms to the Sankosh, but three years later they were driven back by Mir Jumla, the Nawab of Dacca, who occupied Gargoon, and there concluded a treaty with the Ahom Raja Sutumla, otherwise known as Jaiyadwaj Singh. The stars in their courses fought, however, on the Ahom side. The rains set in with a severity exceptional even in that rainy land, the country was converted into a swamp, and disease made havoc of the Muhammadans crowded together in their water-logged camp.

An interesting account of this invasion has been given by the Muhammadan historians.* The Assamese occupied a strong fort at Kajali, which was situated near the western mouth of the river Kalang, but on the approach of the enemy, evacuated it without striking a blow in its defence. Another fort was situated at Simlagarh which seems to have been quite close to Kaliabar.† The place is described as very strong and high, and the inhabitants are said to have been as numerous as ants. Two sides of the fort had battlemented walls, and guns were placed without a break along them. In front there was a moat, and pits had been dug and filled with the *panjis* or bamboo spikes which are still so generally used in Assam at the present day. In spite of its strength the fort was taken without much difficulty by the Muhammadans and the garrison fled. A great naval battle then took place in the neighbourhood of Silghat. The Assamese are said to have had seven or eight hundred ships engaged, but they were again defeated and lost half their fleet, each of the captured vessels being armed with a gun. On the conclusion of peace the Muhammadans marched back again down the valley and suffered great privations when crossing the Kajali plain, a feat which it is said had never before been, attempted by any army. The difficulties of their advance must have been immense, if the Nowgong *chapari* was covered at that time with the dense growth of reeds and

* Vide a paper by Professor Blochmann in J. A. S. B., vol. XLI, pt. I, no. I, p. 49, etc.

† The remains of this fort are perhaps to be found in the Kechakatigarh near Misa

elephant grass that are found there at the present day, and there is nothing improbable in the statement of the Muhammadan historian, that for four days the soldiers had to subsist on water. A large number of men were lost in the retreat down the valley, and by 1667 the Ahoms had again established themselves at Gauhati. A few years later this town was retaken by the Muhammadans, but it was captured again by the Ahoms during the reign of Gadadhar Singh (1681-1695) and from that time onward Goalpara remained the frontier outpost of the Muhammadan dominions. Local tradition has it that the district was colonized by this prince who transported families from Upper Assam to Nowgong.

The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of his successor Rudra Singh (1695—1714). This powerful prince waged successful wars against the Kachari Raja and the king of Jaintia, and his generals brought both of these chiefs captive to the Ahom court. The Ahoms were, however, unable to impose their yoke upon the free and savage highlanders, who rose as one man and butchered the garrisons who had been left in the chain of forts across the Jaintia Hills. Rudra Singh was the first of the Ahom kings to publicly become the disciple of Hindu priests, and after his death the power of the Ahom kingdom began steadily to decline.

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince, much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands.

**Pramatta
Singh,
1744—1751.
Rajeswar
Singh,
1751—1769.**

The reign of his successor Pramatta Singh was uneventful, and, during the incumbency of the next prince Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds and declined the proffered honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and, though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

**Lakshmi
Singh,
1769—1780
The Moama-
ria insurrec-
tion.**

Lakshmi Singh's reign was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borborua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom

chroniclers, and it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named Nahor Khora and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain. The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagini Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamarias, had forcibly taken her to wife, and, as he

Success and
subsequent
defeat of
Moamarias.

was bending down at the *bihu* to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader, the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age nor sex.* The house of the Moamaria mahunt was surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamarias were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

Gaurinath
Singh,
1780-1795.
Moamarias
again victo-
rious.

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorizing any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamarias with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom

* The Moamarias say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is no doubt an oriental exaggeration.

the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees forsaking their wives and children." The highest Hindu castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his terror left even his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler. "The Mataks harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Daffa Hills, and others in the fort of the Buragohain who was fighting with the Mataks for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792 a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was re-taken, Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai, was subdued, and in March 1794 Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive

victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his enemies in check by the help of sepoy trained on the English system.

**Kamaleswar
Singh,
1796—1809
A. D.**

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died and was succeeded by Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daffas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush,* a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandughat. The Daffas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoy in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamaris and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

**Final col-
lapse of the
Ahom king-
dom.**

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Buragohain or prime minister and fled to Calcutta and

* This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkundases to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonry, the size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and reinstated the Bor Phukan; but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed, and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned with a large force and replaced him on the throne.

They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820 Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Such was their terror of the Burmese that it is said that parents would kill a crying child if it could not easily be pacified. Women who fell into their hands were violated with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fifty men were decapitated on the banks of the Kalang river, in revenge for the opposition offered to the Burmese army before Gauhati, and upwards of two hundred persons of both sexes and all ages were imprisoned in a grass and bamboo shed and burned alive. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra. The Burmese evacuated Gauhati without striking a blow, and such fighting as

there was took place in the districts of Sibsagar and Nowgong. Rangpur was occupied in 1825, and in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

Ahom Administration.
The paik system.

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms, but their history is more intimately connected with the Sibsagar district. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.*

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which, (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *powa paik*. Over every twenty *gots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *baras* a *saikia*, and over every ten *saikias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the state, and, while so engaged, was supported by the other members. The Raja and his ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments,

* This account of the social life and manners and customs of the Ahoms is principally based on old Ahom chronicles, translations of which are to be found in the office of the Superintendent of Ethnography.

which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not, the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into disrepair. Embankments of this nature were constructed along the left bank of the Brahmaputra from Silghat to Kajalimukh, along the south bank of the Rupahi, and along the west bank of the Jamuna, and must have proved of the greatest value to the villagers. The duty of providing the various articles required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indication of the reluctance with

which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

War

But though the common people seem to have been compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gadi*. Their guides, however, failed them; they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design, and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moa-

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, i.e. labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the Assamese would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

marias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A.D., the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, blood-thirsty, and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'elite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty

Muhamma-
dans des-
cribe Ahoms
as brave
soldiers.

Uncertainty
and arbitra-
ry character
of Govern-

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume XLI, Part 1, pages 49-100.

of tenure, under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions, and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the administration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that "blood may not be shed."

Instances
of this.

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh, 1611—1649 A.D. A Katak, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander

on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Katakai reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Katakai responsible for watching the movements of the enemy, whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Katakai was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern—a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented, and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later, the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to re-visit his former home would suffer the penalty of death with all his family “even to the child in the womb.” Five hundred men attempted to return as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

Savage punishments:
an official
blinded for
not dismount-
ing before
his official
superior.

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769—1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the time. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior the Borborua. A complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles and his brother, were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century, it was no uncommon thing to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more

than one case is quoted, in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment too was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

The Ahoms, even after they became a powerful nation, Social life amongst the Ahoms seem to have adhered to a simple style of life, in which there was little of extravagance or luxury. They have left few masonry memorials of their rule; the Raja's palace is almost invariably referred to as "a planked house," and, according to Buchanan Hamilton, the king alone was allowed to erect an edifice of brick. Shoes might not be worn except by the special license of the king, bedsteads and curtains were only to be found in the houses of the rich, and all but the most important visitors to a noble's house sat on the bare ground. The account given of the Raja's palace at Gargaon by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion is pitched in a more exalted key. Twelve thousand workmen had been engaged on its construction for a year, and the audience hall was 120 cubits long by 30 wide. "The ornaments and curiosities with which the whole woodwork of the house was filled defy all description: nowhere in the whole inhabited world would you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation, and pictures." The absence of all reference to these wonders in the Ahom histories suggests, however, than the Muhammadans were anxious to magnify the power and majesty of the prince they had subdued.

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals, which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang, Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar. They were fond of fishing and shooting, and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction than the one at Auniati; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook, or to the greater beauty of the *sattras* precincts.

Attitude of
Ahoms to-
wards Hin-
duism. Sa-
vage perse-
cution of
Vaishna-
vism.

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were Saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611—1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son

to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans, ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who, in 1692, plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shown even to the sacred head of the Auniati *sattrā*, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhāt. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakhinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and fowls, cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of their unholy food.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniati gosain; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

During the Moamaria insurrection the religious orders again fell upon evil times. The rebel king confined the persons of the four principal gosains, and extorted Rs. 8,000 each from Auniati and Dakhinpat, and Rs. 4,000 each from Garamur and Kamalabari. Religion was degraded by the promulgation of an order that any person could be initiated on payment of a betel nut, and the common people availed themselves in crowds of this indulgence. Subsequently in the reign of Gaurinath Singh the Moamaras attacked the Garamur *sattrā*, burned it to the ground, slew a large number of the disciples and nearly killed the gosain himself. His successor, Kamaleswar Singh, (1795-1809) found himself unable to pay the sepoys whose services were indispensable for the maintenance of some sort of order in the kingdom. Following the example of other monarchs, he called upon the church to supply the funds for the support of the temporal power. Contributions were levied on all the mahunts and the demands of the soldiers were satisfied.

Laxity of
Ahom Hinduism.

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms found the restrictions of their new religion irksome; and their gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral; while not only buffaloes but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first

Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this clearly shows that even towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs—a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moamaria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman ; while at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress, a breach of the covenances for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their women folk in honour, and, even at the present day, the purdah and all that it implies, is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the seventeenth century, two of the queens

The position of women.

almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king, at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714—1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed; and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his stepmother the control of the Khangiamel, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Buragohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shown her and she fell, pierced with spears; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

**Condition of
Province at
time of
cession to
the British.**

In estimating the effects of British rule, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must

be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The native system of government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any lust for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese, the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers, can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom Government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouth of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in

1809 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

Native testimony on this point.

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman, Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills :—"Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the Province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure, been fulfilled; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property, which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

On passing into our hands Nowgong was first administered with Kamrup and Darrang as the Lower Assam division, but in 1833, it was formed into a separate district. The head-quarters were established at Puranigudam, but it was found that there was not enough high land there for a civil station, and in 1835 they were transferred to Rangagara. This place proved to be unhealthy and was not sufficiently central, and in 1839 the Magistrate's Court was moved to Nowgong, where it has since remained. The boundaries of the district have also undergone considerable change. The Dhansiri was originally selected as the eastern frontier, and Nowgong included the country inhabited by the Mikirs and a considerable portion of the North Cachar and Naga Hills. In 1853, North Cachar was formed into a separate subdivision, and in the following year Tula Ram's* territory was added to this charge. In 1867, the Naga Hills and a large part of the Mikir Hills were erected into a separate district, the subdivision of North Cachar was abolished, and a considerable portion of the territory of which it was composed was placed under the management of the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar. In 1898, a large part of the Mikir Hills was retransferred to Nowgong and the district took its present form.

Few events of historical interest have occurred in Nowgong during the time that it has been administered as a British district. In 1835, the revenue amounted

* For an account of Tula Ram and his small principality, see District Gazetteer of Cachar.

to Rs. 60,475 and the expenditure to Rs. 35,622. Ten years later the revenue had risen to Rs. 131,000, but then ensued a period of complete stagnation, and in 1853 it was less than it was in 1845. The causes of this stagnation were said to be "frequent high inundations, repeated visitations of cholera and small pox carrying off thousands, and the licentious habits of the people." The term "licentious habits" apparently refers to the use of opium, this being a drug to which the inhabitants of Nowgong have always been addicted, as the people could hardly be described as licentious in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The appalling results of *kala-azar* are described in the following chapter, but it is significant to find that the local officers even in the fifties were far from hopeful with regard to the future of the Assamese. In 1854, Major Butler wrote as follows. "In no district in Assam are the people in more prosperous circumstances than in Nowgong. Rice, their common food, is cheap and abundant; numerous rivers and lakes afford a plentiful supply of fish; their gardens furnish vegetables and fruit; and the climate rendering but little clothing necessary, with a trifling revenue to pay, they have every reason to be satisfied and contented; and I believe they are grateful for the protection of the British Government. With all these advantages, however, they are a licentious and degraded race and appear degenerating rapidly. Numbers of children die annually and the period of their existence seems diminishing. Few adults attain old age, and we almost despair of

population increasing or of their condition being ameliorated by education or the acquirement of more industrial habits." *

The attachment of the aboriginal tribes to opium led to a serious riot at Phulaguri in 1861, when the cultivation of the poppy was prohibited. *Mels* or village assemblies were held day after day to discuss the new and most obnoxious orders, and were attended by large numbers of the people. The police endeavoured to disperse these meetings, and arrest the ringleaders, but found themselves powerless in the presence of such vastly superior numbers; and on December 18th Lieutenant Singer, the Assistant Commissioner, was sent from Nowgong to enquire into the matter. This unfortunate young officer called upon the villagers to disperse, and, when they failed to do so, ordered the police to deprive them of their clubs. One of the constables was assaulted as he was endeavouring to carry out this order and Lieutenant Singer, when coming to his assistance, was felled to the ground by a blow from a thick bamboo. He was deserted by the police, who incontinently fled, though the firing of a single musket was subsequently enough to make the crowd fall back, and was afterwards cruelly murdered at the instigation of one of the ringleaders who said "the saheb did not come to redress our grievances but to put us in bonds; he is still alive, kill him." The Deputy Commissioner on receiving news of the

The Phulaguri riot.

* Travels and adventures in the Province of Assam by Major John Butler; London, Smith Elder and Company, 1855, p. 245.

murder sent out a few men from the detachment of twenty-four sepoy of the 2nd Assam Light Infantry who were stationed in Nowgong, but remained behind himself to protect the treasury. An application was despatched to Tezpur for re-inforcements, and Colonel Hopkinson, who happened to be there, ordered across fifty sepoy, and then proceeded by steamer to Gauhati to bring up eighty more, some of whom were landed at Tezpur. No further opposition was encountered and the Deputy Commissioner proceeded to Phulaguri and held a judicial investigation into the causes of the riot.

The whole occurrence seems to have been mismanaged, and to have been viewed by the local authorities with unnecessary alarm. The people had been irritated by the prohibition of poppy cultivation, and there were rumours of a tax on incomes and *pan*. Rightly or wrongly the villagers had formed the idea that they could not get a hearing from the Deputy Commissioner, and prior to Lieutenant Singer's death the mistake was made of attempting to coerce a dangerous crowd with an insufficient force. After that lamentable occurrence the authorities seem to have overestimated the gravity of the occasion, and the Commissioner describes the force of 50 sepoy marching from Laokhoa to Nowgong as protected on either flank by an impassable morass, as though they could not have easily beaten off any attack that might have been made on them by villagers armed with nothing better than bamboo clubs.

The subsequent history of Nowgong has been very uneventful, and there is no district in Assam which has been and still is so much cut off from the outside world and the hurried march of progress. The principal event of recent years has been the quiet but steady extermination of the people from *kala azar*, but this is a matter for which reference should be made to the following chapter.

The district possesses very few remains which are Archæological remains. of any interest to the archæologist. The temple at Kamakhya near Silghat dates from 1745, A.D. and is built of stone and brick in the usual Ahom style. On the Jugijan, in the Kapili valley, there are the ruins of a fort and of three stone temples, two of which were of considerable size and were dedicated to Siva. These temples were built of large blocks of stone ornamented with carvings and bas-reliefs. The appearance of the ruins would suggest that they were overthrown by an earthquake, but nothing definite is known about them. Reference has been already made to the remains of Jangal Balahu's fort near Raha, and there is another rampart of a similar character near the Rangara inspection bungalow in the Samaguri tahsil. On the Chapanalla hill in Chalchali mauza there are the remains of some stone temples and old fortifications, and there is a fine tank with brick lined sides near Jiajuri. A list of temples and of other sacred places will be found in the next chapter.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

AHOM KINGS.		MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS.	
A. D.		A. D.	
1228	Sukapha.	1204	Baktiar Khilji invades Assam.
1268	Sutenpha.	1220	Ghiyas-ud-din-Bahadur Shah advances to Sadiya, but is defeated.
1281	Subinpha.	1256	Iktiyarud-din Yusbak Tughril Khan invades the Brahmaputra Valley but is ultimately defeated.
1293	Sukangpha.	1337	Muhammed Shah sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish.
1332	Sukampha.		
1364	Sutupha-treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Safrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.		
1376-1380	Interregnum.		
1380	Sukemthi, a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1389-1398	Interregnum.		
1398	Sudangpha.		
1407	Siyangpha.		
1422	Suphukpha.		
1439	Susingpha-defeats Nagas.		
1488	Suhangpha-defeated by Kacharis in 1490, and murdered by a convict.		
1493	Supimpha, a cruel prince assassinated by his ministers.		
1497	Suhunmung, alias Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja. Conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom 1523. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bhareli river. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur his capital in 1536. Assassinated 1539.		
1539	Sukhenmung-built Gargaon(Nazira).		
1552	Sukampha.		
1611	Suchengpha or Pratap Singh. Assists Bali Narayan against Mussalmans, besieges Hajo, but is driven back. Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.		
1649	Surumpha. Deposed.		
1652	Suchingpha. Deposed.		
1654	Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh. Ahoms occupy Goalpara, 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla, who enters Gargaon, 1661.		
1663	Chakradwaj. Ahoms reoccupy Gauhati in 1667.		
			KOCH KINGS.
		1509-1534	Viswa Singh—Founds Koch kingdom, advances against Ahoms but was apparently defeated.
		1534-1564	Nar Narayan-conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon circa 1563 A. D. Subdues Rajas of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur, Tipperah and Sylhet, Kala Pahar invades Assam in 1553 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.
		1531-1593	Raghu Rai obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankosh.
		1593-1614	Parikshit-builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakshmi Narayan, calls in Muhammadans to his aid.
		1614-1637	Bali Narayan—Invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—*Concluded.***AHOM KINGS.**

A. D.	
1670	Adayaditya Singh, assassinated.
1673	Suklumppha-poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati.
1674	Suhung-assassinated.
1674	Teenkungiya-assassinated.
1674	Suhungpha-blinded and murdered.
1677	Sudinpha-assassinated.
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja) assassinated.
1681	Gadadhar Singh—Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.
1695	Budra Singh—founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.
1714	Sib Singh—a weak prince who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibsagar.
1744	Framatta Singh.
1751	Rajeswar Singh. Decline of Ahom power.
1769	Lakshmi Singh. Out-break of Moamaria rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.
1780	Gaurinath Singh. Driven to Gauhati by Moamaras. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is, however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja, asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.
1795	Kamaleswar Singh. Deposes Krishna Narayan.
1809	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816.
1816	Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.
1818	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave—Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between British and Burmese Governments.
1825	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

CHAPTER III.

THE PEOPLE.

Area and density—Town and villages—Variation in population—Immigration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and tribes—Religions—Occupations—Marriage customs—Amusements and festivals—The Bihus—Gosains—*Sattras*—Temples.

Area and density.

The district covers an area of 3,843 square miles and is extremely sparsely peopled, there being on the average only 68 persons to the square mile. There are however, marked variations from this mean and in spite of the ravages of *kala azar*, there are still considerable areas in Nowgong which support a moderately dense rural population. Mr. Mills thus describes his voyage up the Kalang in 1853.* “The villages are situated on the banks, and the scenery from the steamer was, after the immense tracts of jungle I had seen unvaried by the sight of a village, most gratifying, it was of densely populated villages with good gardens and rich cultivation. There is perhaps no part of Assam more populous and prosperous.”

The banks of the Kalang between Nowgong and Kaliabar are still lined with villages, and in the Nowgong tahsil there was a density of 386 to the square mile in 1901. Hatichong and Kachamari, two mauzas which

* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills. Calcutta, 1854.

lie west of the Kalang opposite Nowgong town, had a density of 303 over an area of 50 square miles ; in the Samaguri tahsil there were 212 people to the square mile ; and in the Chutial and Barbhagia mauzas immediately to the north 322. There is in fact a belt of fairly populous country on either side of the Kalang from Kaliabar to Jagi. On the other hand the mauzas which fringe the Brahmaputra are inundated in the rains and can only support a very scanty population. Juria, for instance, had a density of only 21 over 124 square miles, and Mayang and Gerua Bokani were little better. It is, however, the hills mauzas and the upper valleys of the Kapili, the Jamuna, the Dhansiri and the Langpher, which bring down the average of the district to its unusually low level, for here over a total area of 2,070 square miles there was in 1901 an average population of only 21 to the square mile.* There is of course abundance of good culturable land which is still awaiting settlement in Nowgong, but the district is not so absurdly underpeopled as the figures of density would at first suggest. There is room no doubt for an enormous increase in the population, but there are hundred of square miles included in the *chapari mahals*, the hills, and probably a considerable portion of the Kapili valley, which would never be able to support a really dense agricultural population. The density of each mauza and the decrease in population between 1891 and 1901 will be found in Table II

* The mauzas in question are :—Duars—Salana, Bamuni, Kathiatali Dikharu and Amlaparat, and Mauzas Rangkhong Namati, Langpher, Jamunapar, Lumding Mikir, Lumding Kachari, and Lumding Kuki.

Town and villages.

The district contains one town, Nowgong, which in 1901 had a population of 4,430 souls, and 1,117 villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betel nut trees and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. It is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance, but taking them for what they are worth it appears that villages as a rule run small, three-fifths of the population living in hamlets containing less than 500 persons. The Mikir village, it should however be premised, is quite different from that inhabited by the ordinary Assamese. Like most of the hill tribes they build their houses in clearings near their fields, and the boundaries of the village site can be easily ascertained. They usually live in small hamlets varying in size from three or four to thirty or forty houses.

The earliest estimate of the population was one framed by Mr. Robinson in 1841 who stated that the area was supposed to be 3,870 square miles and the population about 90,000 souls, an estimate which appears to have been too low. The eastern boundary was at this time the Dhansiri and in 1853, after the Naga Hills had been incorporated in Nowgong, the area was given as 8,769 square miles, and the population as 241,300 persons, exclusive of about 100,000 Angami Nagas. This estimate was probably not much beside the mark, but it was not till 1872 that a regular census was taken of the people.

Variation in
population.
Early
estimates.

The statement in the margin shows the population recorded at the last four enumerations and the variation in the intercensal periods. The census of 1872 was not a synchronous one.

Variations
since 1872.

	Population.	Variation + or— per cent.
1872 ...	260,238	
1881 ...	314,893	+ 21
1891 ...	347,307	+ 10·2
1901 ...	261,160	—21·8

It made no pretensions to scientific accuracy, and the excessive increase that occurred during the next nine years affords good grounds for supposing that it was incomplete. The Deputy Commissioner himself pointed out that too much reliance should not be placed upon the returns. The census was a novelty, its objects were not fully understood, and many of the people were afraid that it might only be the preliminary to the introduction of a poll tax. The census of 1891 was probably as accurate as these things can be, and if we assume that the population increased by 25 per cent. in the 19 years that elapsed between the two enumerations, an assumption

which would seem to err, if it errs at all, on the side of over-estimation, the population of 1872 must have been at least 277,000. Between 1881 and 1891, the district was fairly prosperous and healthy, and the natural growth* of the population amounted to nearly 11 per cent. But the seeds of disease had already taken root, and before long the effects of *kala-azar* began to make themselves apparent in the revenue returns, though the awful ravages of this disease were never fully realized till they were expressed in the census figures for 1901.

The history and character of this dreadful fever will be described in the section dealing with the medical aspects of the district, and here it is only necessary to refer to its effects upon the population. Aided by the severe epidemics of cholera and *sm'a'l-pox* with which this sorely afflicted district has been visited, it succeeded in reducing the population to about three-fourths of that recorded in 1891. Terrible though such a reduction is, it fails to give a complete idea of the full effects of this appalling scourge. The gross population of 1901 was swelled by a large number of foreigners brought up to the railway or the tea plantations, and the caste and language tables show that the decrease in the indigenous population during the last intercensal period must have been fully 30 per cent. At the close of the nineteenth century plague and famine were at work in India, and the terrible

* Natural growth here means increase in the number of those born in Nowgong and censused in the Province.

mortality they produced was blazoned abroad to the very ends of the earth. Yet not a single British district in the whole of the Indian Empire lost so large a proportion of its population as the unfortunate district of Nowgong.* The people suffered in silence, the fever killed them steadily but quietly and slowly, and the extent of the havoc wrought was never realized till the results of the census were made known.

But little could be done to mitigate their sufferings. A large number of dispensaries were opened but the treatment and the origin of the disease were alike obscure, and medical science could offer little help. In its initial stages *kala-azar* in no way differs to the casual observer from ordinary malarial fever, and it is only of recent years that the medical profession have admitted that malaria is communicable. Even now that this fact has been realized the difficulties of isolation are immense. The sick linger on for from three months to two years, and it would not be easy to segregate thousands of people for such prolonged periods even if they were willing to submit to this course of treatment. Detection and the subsequent isolation would not take place until the disease had taken a firm hold upon its victim, and had already had ample opportunity of infecting the friends and neighbours.

Kala-azar passed on, leaving behind it a trail of deserted villages and untilled fields, with the jungle creep-

* Bombay and the Central Provinces had the greatest losses. The worst British district in Bombay was Kaira with a loss of 17·8 per cent. the worst British district in the Central Provinces was Saugor with a loss of 20·4.

ing year by year over the kindly works of men. Between 1893 and 1900, the land revenue demand for ordinary cultivation declined by 23 per cent. and the population sank to some fifteen or sixteen thousand less than the probable numbers nearly 30 years before. With such a melancholy record before our eyes it is satisfactory to know that the disease at last is dying out and that the people are again beginning to increase in numbers. The epidemic was most virulent in the Raha tahsil which lost 42 per cent. of its population. The part of the district which escaped most lightly was the north-east corner where many of the tea gardens are situated.

Immigration The tea industry is not nearly so important in Nowgong, as in the Surma Valley or in Upper Assam, and the proportion of foreigners, (11 per cent.) is comparatively small. The total number of persons born outside the Province in 1901 was 29,629, more than a third of whom came from the division of Chota Nagpur. Details for the other Provinces of origin are shown in Table IV. Most of these foreigners were working as coolies either on tea gardens or on the railway. Immigrants other than coolies are represented by the Marwari merchants of Rajputana, artisans from the Punjab, a few Kabuli traders from Afghanistan, and Nepalese who usually earn their living as sawyers or as herdsmen, though some have settled down to agriculture. That Nowgong loses considerably by inter-district transfers is hardly matter for surprise, as it is difficult to understand why any one should voluntarily settle in this much afflicted district while there was

every inducement to the residents to leave its fever stricken villages. Most of the immigrants came from Kamrup and Goalpara, while the emigrants went to Sibsagar and Darrang. The proportion of the latter to the former was nearly three to one in 1901.

As in most of the other districts of Assam, the men in Nowgong exceed the women in numbers, and in 1901 there were only 963 females to every 1,000 males. This disparity is entirely due to the fact that women are in a minority in the immigrant population, and amongst persons born in Nowgong and enumerated in the Province in 1901 there were 1,016 females to every 1,000 males. It is a significant fact that in the last decade there was a large increase in the female element in the population in those parts of Assam in which the mortality was unusually high, and there seem grounds for supposing that the proportion of women tends to increase when public health is bad and vitality low.

The people of Nowgong have no pedantic ideas with regard to early marriage. The statement in the margin shows the percentage of Hindu girls under 10 and between 10 and 15 who have

Percentage of Hindu girls married and widowed.

Age.	Nowgong.	Goalpara.
0-10	0.2	4.8
10-15	10.5	62.4
15-20	Unmarried. 40.1	7.2

performed the marriage ceremony, and the proportion between 15 and 20 who are still unwed. For

purposes of comparison similar figures are shown for Goalpara, as in this district the idea has unfortunately gained ground, that the social status of the family can be raised by imposing the responsibilities of matrimony

on immature girls before they are physically fitted for its functions. Amongst an equal number of girls under 10 there are 24 child wives in Goalpara for every one in Nowgong, and between 10 and 15 the proportion is as 6 to 1. Two fifths of the girls between 15 and 20 in Nowgong are still unmarried, and it is satisfactory to know that the stagnation of the population during the last decade was not due to any unnatural attempt to compel small children to undertake the functions of maternity before their bodies were fitted for this great strain. Such a proceeding, it may be added, only tends to defeat its own ends, as the age statistics recorded in India show, that fertility varies inversely with the extent to which infant marriage is in use.* The attempt to pluck the unripe apple in many cases kills the parent tree, or even where this dire calamity is avoided, deprives it of the power to put forth a second crop.

The growth of the people depends to some extent on the proportion of potential mothers *i.e.* of married women between 15 and 40 in the population. In this respect Nowgong is somewhat at a disadvantage as in 1901 only 14 per cent. of the population were included in this category as compared with 15·7 per cent. in the Province as a whole and 16·9 per cent. in the Central Provinces.

Infirmities.

The abstract below shows out of 10,000 males the number afflicted with the four special infirmities selected for record at the census in Nowgong, in the Province of Assam, and in

	Nowgong.	Assam.	India.
Insane	2	5	3
Deafmute	13	9	6
Blind	7	10	12
Leper	8	13	5

* In this connection see Report on the census of India, 1901, Vol. I, P 480.

the Indian Empire. Deafmutism is exceptionally prevalent, but from the remaining three infirmities Nowgong is comparatively free.

Assamese is the standard language of the district ~~Language.~~ and in 1901 was used by 66 per cent. of the population. Assamese is described by Mr. Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali.* It comes from Bihar through northern Bengal, and not from Bengal proper. The plural and feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax, and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh. being converted into h. by the Assamese and ch. into s. The chief aboriginal languages are Mikir which is used by 13 per cent. [of the people, and Lalung which is used by 5 per cent. Lalung is a member of the Bodo family and forms a link between Bodo, or the Kachari spoken in the submontane tracts of Kamrup and Darrang, and Dimasa or the Kachari spoken in the hills of North Cachar. Mikir is a link between the Bodo and the Naga groups. Rather more than 2 per cent. of the people returned Kachari as their usual form of speech, but the exact dialect whether Bodo or Dimasa it is difficult to ascertain.

The principal foreign languages were Hindi (5 per cent), and Bengali which was returned by a little under six per cent of the population. Bengali, however, means little more than "foreign language," "Bengali" and "foreigner" being almost inter-changeable words in the

* Report on the census of India, 1901, Vol. I, P. 324.

mouths of the Assamese, and the Bengali of the census tables probably includes many forms of speech of the Dravidian family which would be by no means understood of the people of Nadia.

**Caste and
tribes.**

Historically Nowgong has been somewhat of a border land. It is doubtful whether it ever contained the capital of a powerful prince, and, as a natural consequence, none of the great race castes, which are found in considerable numbers in other parts of the valley, are very strongly represented. It was never colonized by the Ahoms and the number of that caste now found within the district borders is comparatively small. It was some distance from the centre of the Chutiya power, and, in spite of the fact that after the downfall of that kingdom, the Ahoms deported many Chutiya families to other parts of the Brahmaputra Valley, there were less than 7,000 members of that caste in the district in 1901. The Kalitas, the caste that stands for middle class respectability in Assam, numbered a little over 16,000, and there were only 7,000 Kewat's who rank next after the Kalita according to Assamese ideas. The bulk of the population are members of the aboriginal tribes, the Mikirs (36,000), the Lalungs (29,000), the Kacharis (12,000), and the Koch, the Hindu caste to which the hillmen are admitted on conversion, (34,000.) In the following pages a short account is given of those indigenous castes which had 5,000 representatives or more in the district in 1901.*

* An alphabetical glossary of all castes censused in the Province will be found in chapter XI of the Census Report for 1901.

The Borias are a caste peculiar to Assam, which is formed from the offspring of Brahman and Ganak widows and their descendants. Boria is said to be derived from "bari", a widow, but the people prefer to call themselves Sut. This term is said by some to be connected with the word Sudra, and by others to be derived from Sut, the expounder of the Puranas, who was himself the son of a Brahman widow, but the most plausible explanation seems to be that it is an abbreviation of Suta, the name given in the Shastras to the offspring of a Brahman woman by a Vaisya or Kshatriya father. One authority defines a Boria as the child of a Brahman widow, and a Sut as the result of union between a Sudra widow and a Brahman, but it is doubtful whether this explanation is correct, as in the latter case the child would presumably be of the same caste as its mother. The children of Brahman girls who have attained puberty before marriage and so have to be married to men of a lower caste, are also classed with Borias.

Borias.
Males 3,708
Females 4091

It is a singular fact that Borias are more numerous in Nowgong than in any other district, though the number of Brahmans there is comparatively small. The explanation offered by an educated Brahman of that district was that the gosains and mohants of Nowgong had put pressure upon householders to give away young Brahman widows in marriage to men of lower caste. The suggestion seems a strange one from the mouth of a Brahman, but is given for what it is worth. Agriculture is the ordinary occupation of the Borias,

and their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of other low caste Assamese. The Nowgong tahsil is the principal centre of the Boria population.

Brahmans.**Males 3,356****Females 2,769**

The majority of the Brahmans of Nowgong are Assamese as distinguished from Bengalis or up country men. They are said to be the descendants of Brahman families who were brought to Assam towards the end of the fifteenth century from Kanouj, Mithila, Gaur and other places. Most of them live by agriculture, though, as they are unable to touch the plough themselves, they have to get the actual work done for them by hired labourers. The poorer amongst them act as priests, a calling which is considered to entail a certain loss of social status.

Chutiyas.**Males 3,316****Females 3,447**

The Chutiyas, like the Koch and the Ahoms, are one of the race castes of Assam. Their physical appearance suggests a Mongolian origin, their language, which is still preserved amongst the Deoris or priestly clan, belongs to the Bodo family, and it seems probable that they are a section of the great Bodo race which includes the Garo, the Kachari, and the Tippera. It is supposed that their original home was in the hills through which the Subansiri makes its way, and that they entered the Assam Valley before the beginning of the 13th century A. D. They founded a kingdom in the neighbourhood of Sadiya, whose western boundary extended as far as the Disang river, and were overthrown by the Ahoms at the beginning of the 16th century. Their conquerors wisely deported the leading families to different parts of the Assam Valley, but the great mass of the Chutiyas

are still to be found in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The caste is divided into four subdivisions, Hindu, Ahom, Deori, and Borahi. The latter, as their name implies, are still unconverted and eat pork, but the number of Borahi Chutiyas is very small. The Ahom Chutiyas have for some generations been converts to Hinduism but in the social scale they rank below the Hindu Chutiya, and their presence in a house is said to debar a Brahman from drinking water there. The Ahom and Hindu Chutiyas can smoke but cannot eat together, and, in theory, cannot intermarry. A member of the Ahom section can, however, obtain a Hindu Chutiya girl if he is willing to pay a slightly higher price for her, but the bride sinks to the status of her husband. Hindu Chutiyas are sometimes united by the *hompura* ceremony, while the *chaklong* rite, which is the Ahom form of marriage, is in vogue amongst the Ahom Chutiyas. This ceremony consists in the interchange of the *temi* and *katari*, the box in which betel nut is carried, and the knife with which it is cut, the tying of the nuptial knot, and a feast to the friends and relations. A hole is then cut in the corner of the house through which the bride is removed. The Chutiyas are far from strict in their views on matrimonial matters, and one native gentlemen reports that 50 per cent of the so called married couples have performed no ceremony at all, and that a girl sometimes changes her husband nine or ten times. The social position of the caste is low, and almost all of them are petty cultivators. They burn their dead and perform the *sradh* ceremony at the

expiry of a month. Brahmans of inferior social standing act as their priests.

Jugis.

Males 7,334

Females 7,711

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving, and who are looked down upon by their superiors in the social scale. Like other humble castes, they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account, they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation of Siva. They recently submitted a memorial to the Local Administration asking for permission to assume the title of Nath, and they are endeavouring to improve their position by introducing the use of the *hompura* marriage ceremony. They are divided into two subdivisions the *polupohas* and *katanis*, and are ministered to by degraded Brahmans. Very few Jugis now earn their living as weavers, and the caste as a whole has taken to agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Kacharis.

Males 6,700

Females 5,123

An account of the origin of the Kachari tribe has already been given in the preceding chapter. In Nowgong they are divided into two different sections. Those who live in the Barbhagia, Dhing, and Khatoalgau mauzas near the Brahmaputra, are said to be Bodos akin to the Kacharis of Darrang, while those in the valley of the Kapili are Dimasa. The former are known as Jharuas or Chaiduaria Kacharis, the latter as Hojais. The two sections are quite distinct and have nothing to do with one another. There are no subdivisions amongst the Jharuas, but the Hojais are said to be divided into the following clans most of which

are endogamous :—Rabha, Ramsa, Kheremia, Thengal Sonoal, and Jaladha. Their social position is of course low, but the Hindu gosains are willing to receive them as their disciples, and, if they are prepared to abandon their pork and beer, will even enrol them as members of the Koch caste.

Their villages are surrounded with fences, but present a dirty and untidy appearance, as pigs and fowls are allowed to wander about in every direction. Agriculture is their normal occupation, and rice the staple crop grown. But though efficient agriculturists, they have not that contempt for daily labour which is so marked a characteristic of the Assamese. They readily take work on tea gardens, and in 1901 nearly 14,000 Kacharis were censused on the plantations of Assam. Though still using their tribal form of speech in their own villages, most of them can speak and understand Assamese. The national religion is of the ordinary animistic type. The principal god is called Siju and is represented by the cactus which is to be seen growing in the courtyard of every Kachari house. In addition to Siju there are a large number of other spirits, most of which are hostile to men; and the main object of religion is to ascertain in times of trouble the name of the spirit responsible, and the way in which it may most easily be appeased.

Marriage is generally by purchase, a bride ranging in price from Rs. 60 to Rs. 100. Where the man is unable to provide this sum, he works for his father-in-law, a year's labour being usually reckoned as being

worth about Rs. 30. Pregnancy prior to marriage does not entail any social disability, provided that the father acknowledges the child and is a Kachari by caste.

Kalita.

Males 8,419

Females 7,907

The following paragraphs are taken from the Census Report of 1901.

There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kul-lupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence, or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is, that they are the remains of immigrants from India who settled in Assam, at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word "Kalita" was originally applied to all Indian immigrants who were not Brahmans. The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional sub-castes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the "*Hom*" ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can inter-marry with, and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mili, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri

and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita, and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their ranks; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society, Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Kochees could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koche is generally the harder and stronger man of the two.

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman, but the poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification, but it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant does not forfeit the position in the society unless her lover is of a lower caste.

The great centre of the Kalita population is to be found in the Samaguri and Nowgong tahsils and in the mauzas immediately to the east.

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners and most of them earn their living as clerks or officers in the employ

Kayasthas.
Males 1,337
Females 913

of Government or of Managers of tea gardens. A certain number of Kayasthas are also really Kalitas who have risen above the necessity for performing manual labour.

Kewats

Males 6,784

Females 6,506

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose hands Brahmans will take water, and who according to Assamese ideas rank immediately after the Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats, as the Jaliya or fishing subdivision of the caste occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than the Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common except the name Kewat or Kaibartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The ordinary occupation of the caste is agriculture, but a few of them have succeeded in reaching that desirable position in which the pen takes the place of the ploughshare as a means of livelihood. A respectable Brahman acts as their priest. The Patias are a section of the Kewats who migrated to Nowgong from Upper Assam at the time of the Burmese invasions. Mat-making was their occupation and this was the origin of their name. Most of them have now taken to agriculture and intermarry with other Kewats.

Koches.

Males 18,745

Females 17,446

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin, which at the beginning of the 16th century rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his

conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur, and by the middle of the 16th century, the Koch king had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that at the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste into which new converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place, and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off. The principal subdivision is the Bar Koch, who are looked upon as a clean Sudra caste and from whose hands Brahmans will take water. The same distinction is not accorded to the Saru Koch, though they conform in most essentials to the somewhat lax standard of Hinduism exacted in Assam. Three other subdivisions are graded in accordance with the extent to which they have forsworn the attractions of unconverted life. The Kamtali abstain from intoxicating liquor and usually from pork, the Hiremia still keep pigs but no longer indulge in the use of liquor, while the Madahi are Hindus only to the extent of having taken *saran*, and still permit themselves great freedom in all matters of food and drink.

The Lalungs are a member of the Bodo family and their language forms a link between Bodo or Plains

Lalungs.
Males 13,542
Females 15,413

and Dimasa or Hills Kachari. Their name is said to be derived from *lal* (saliva), as, according to the tribal legends, they sprang from the saliva of a local god. The bulk of the tribe are to be found in the *chapari* north of the Kalang, the Raha tahsil, and the mauzas near the junction of the Kapili and the Kalang, but their numbers were terribly diminished between 1891 and 1901. *Kala azar* was especially prevalent amongst them, and in the short period of ten years the Lalungs declined in numbers from 46,658 to 28,985, a loss of life which it is positively painful to contemplate. Part of this decrease was possibly due to the inclusion of converted Lalungs in the ranks of the Koch, but there can be little doubt that the mortality amongst the tribe was quite appalling. According to their own account, they originally lived near Dimapur, but moved into the Jaintia Hills to avoid the necessity of providing the Kachari Raja with human milk, an article of diet for which he had an unreasonable craving. This legend is referred to in a history of the Dimarua Rajas compiled in 1772. A. D. This history has it that when Pratappur, a city on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, was captured by Arimatta, a large number of the inhabitants fled to Demera, a fertile region in the country of the Kachari Raja. This prince was in the habit of drinking human milk, a habit which earned for him the dislike of his subjects young and old. One day, two of the king's messengers entered the house of a Mikir woman and found her nursing her baby. One man seized the infant while the other attempted to

milk the mother, who, furious with indignation, stretched him dead at her feet with a blow from a hoe. The Demera Raja feared that the Kachari prince would punish him for this murder, as it occurred within his territories, and migrated westwards to Dimarua with all his people.

Another legend represents the Lalungs as moving back from the hills into the plains, as they disliked the ruling of the Khasi chiefs that inheritance should go through the female line. Their own rules of inheritance are, however, strange. A woman may either enter her husband's clan or the husband may enter that of the wife, but all property and children of the marriage belong to the clan which was adopted at the time of the wedding. If a man enters his wife's clan he can leave it at her death but generally loses all claim to his property and children. In the plains the Lalungs live in houses similar to those occupied by the ordinary Assamese, but in the hills they build, like other aboriginal tribes, on platforms or *changs* raised a few feet above the ground. They are great opium eaters, and the indifference and idleness produced by that drug combined with the heavy cash expenditure incurred on its purchase, tend to keep them poor. The story of the Phulaguri riot, when the cultivation of opium was prohibited in 1861, has been already told in the preceding Chapter. The tribe is very faithful to its ancestral faith and the number of Lalungs who described themselves as Hindus in 1901 was very small. Their religion is of the ordinary animistic type, and is chiefly

concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits and with sacrifices to ensure prosperity. Like other animistic tribes they eat pork and fowl and drink rice beer; but as poultry and pigs are incompatible with gardening, the houses of the Lalungs are not surrounded by the dense groves of fruit trees found in the villages inhabited by the Assamese. The most important part of the marriage ceremony is the feast to the relatives and friends, and their girls, prior to marriage, are allowed a considerable degree of latitude as long as they do not confer their favours outside the tribe.

Mikirs.

Males 17,993

Females 17,338

According to Colonel Dalton, the Mikirs were originally settled in the North Cachar Hills but were driven westward into Jaintia territory by the Kacharis. Dissatisfied with the reception accorded to them there, they sent an embassy to the Ahom Governor at Raha, offering to place themselves under the protection of his master, but, as the luckless delegates were unable to make themselves understood, they were forthwith buried alive in a tank which that officer happened to be excavating. Hostilities ensued, but the Mikirs were soon suppressed, and were settled in the hills that bear their name, though a considerably colony are still to be found in south Kamrup and the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills. They are divided into four tribes Chintong, Ronghang, Amri and Dumrali, and these tribes are again subdivided into various exogamous groups. In the hills the Mikirs live by *jhum* or shifting cultivation, and raise crops of cotton, chillies, rice, and vegetables. All the members of a family live in

one house, which is thus of considerable size. Their religion is of the usual animistic type, and is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits. Infant marriage is unknown and sexual license within the tribe prior to marriage is tolerated. A full account of the Mikirs will be found in the monograph now under preparation.

The Doms, or as they prefer to call themselves, Nadi-
yals are the boating and fishing caste of Assam. They
are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the
Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though
their manners and customs do not differ materially from
that of the Assamese Nadiyal, except in the following
particular. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghakata*
net, and in theory only, sell their fish on the river's
bank within a paddles throw of the boat, whereas
the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market.
The Nadiyals are probably descended from the abori-
ginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still
to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam before the
Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions
now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly
in their habits and particular in their observance of
the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for
the objectionable expression "Dom," which undoubtedly
they have borne for centuries, by saying that they
were the last of the Assamese to be converted from
Buddhism. They are darker in complexion than most
of the Assamese, but have a good physique and by
no means uncomely faces. Their women are most

Nadiyals.
Males 9,346
Females 9,541

prolific, and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittil Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be descended from a Brahman father and Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and intermarry with Nadiyal girls. The bulk of the caste are found in the Nowgong and Raha tahsils near the banks of the Kalang. In the reign of Kamaleswar (1795-1809 A.D.) all Doms were compelled to have a fish tattooed upon their foreheads, and in 1855 Major Butler reported that there were still men living in Nowgong who were branded with this mark.

Wamasudras.
Males 2,628
Females 2,671

The Chandals are a boating and fishing caste, said by Manu to have sprung from the union of a Brahman woman with a Sudra, and therefore to be the lowest of the low. They are a cheerful and hardworking people but are heartily despised by their Hindu neighbours, and a degraded Brahman acts as their priest. A section of the Chandals has formed itself into a separate caste called Hira. They work as potters but do not use the wheel, laying on the clay in strips. Many of the Chandals have now taken to agriculture. Most of them live in the western portion of the district, north of the Kalang.

Classified by religion the population of Nowgong **Religion.** was distributed in the following proportions in 1901.—Hinduism 64 per cent. Muhammadanism 5 per cent. Animism 31 per cent. The three principal sects of Hinduism recorded at the census of 1901 were Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism.

Nearly eight per cent. of the Hindus in 1901 **Saktism.** described themselves as followers of Sakti, but almost five-sixths of the Saktists were censused on the tea plantations or the railway. The great majority of these persons were no doubt so styled, because they ate meat and drank liquor, though this in a garden cooly is not so much an indication of his adherence to the goddess Kali as of the uncertainty of his title to the name of Hindu at all. Saktism is a foreign growth in Assam and Vaishnavism is the national form of Hinduism.

Sivaitism is the counterpart of Saktism and is con- **Sivaitism** cerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, only 644 persons in Nowgong professed this special form of Hinduism.

A considerable number of Hindus did not attempt to **Vaishnavism** specify their sect in 1901, but of those who committed themselves to this extent 90 per cent. declared their adherence to Vaishnavism. This form of Hinduism is thus described in the Census Report for 1901.

“Sankar Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A. D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who, according to tradition, had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the king of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to

his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision, where, in conjunction with his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people, who formed a large proportion of his converts, found his injunction a counsel of perfection, and the Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the Sattrā at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from small-pox in the neighbourhood of the Sattrā is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who are members of this caste, established sects, called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste, and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teaching of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas", as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no God but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their Gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb, arose one stormy day when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna the god of rain, Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater and was incontinently by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition. The proportion of Mahapurushias in Nowgong is exceptionally high, and in 1901 about two-thirds of the Vaishnavas declared themselves to be members of this sect.

The chief exponents of the Vaishnavite faith are ^{The} the gosains who live, each in his *sattr*a or college, ^{Vaishnavite-} surrounded by his *bhokots* or resident disciples. Many ^{Gosains.} of these *sattr*as are supported by large grants of revenue free land, made by the Ahom kings and confirmed by the British Government, and the gosain receives an annual contribution, varying from four or five annas to two rupees or more, from each of his

shishyas or non resident disciples. This subscription is generally paid through a *medhi* or agent, who holds an important position in the social economy of the village, and often ranks with the *gaobura* or village headman appointed by the Government. At certain seasons of the year the gosains tour through the villages, are visited by their followers, and receive into the Hindu faith members of the aboriginal tribes who are considered worthy of admission. These progresses are generally attended with considerable pomp and dignity. If the journey is made during the rainy season the gosain and his followers travel in state barges, whose curved prows and slender lines distinguish them from the ordinary rough-built country boat. Most of the *sattras* own one or more fine elephants, and these ponderous animals take a prominent part in the procession that escorts the spiritual leader of the people. The gosain himself is carried in a litter, drums are beaten and cymbals clashed before him, and when he alights he is not permitted to touch the ground with his bare feet. It is not always that the influence of the priest is used for good. Bigotry and intolerance and a dislike to change or progress in any form are often found in those who profess to be the ministers of God, but from reproaches of this kind the Vaishnava gosains of Upper Assam are almost entirely free. Dignified but courteous in their demeanour, they have ever been noted for their loyalty to Government, and their influence is altogether beneficial in encouraging purity of life and obedience to the authorities. The

bulk of the Assamese Hindus in Nowgong are disciples of one or the other of the following gosains, whose *sattras* are situated on the Majuli in Jorhat—Auniati, Dakhinpat, Garamur, Kamalabari, Elengi, Karatipur, and Mahara. The Matak gosain of Lakhimpur has also a certain following in the district.*

The typical *sattr*a consist of a *namghor* or prayer house, which is a large open shed supported on massive wooden pillars. The roof is generally made of thatch supported on massive wooden pillars, and at one end there is often a shrine in which the titular idol is carefully screened from the vulgar eye. The floor is made of beaten earth, and there are generally a few drums and cymbals lying about which are used in the daily ritual. The house of the gosain is situated near the *namghor*, and, in close proximity, there are store rooms which contain a liberal stock of rice, and all the various products of the country, fine silk cloths, and a valuable collection of native jewellery. The resident *bhokots* live in lines of cottages. The whole premises are usually enclosed by a fence or wall, which is entered through a rustic lichgate, and, as they often contain really magnificent umbrageous trees, the general effect is very picturesque. In the more important *sattras* gosains and *bhokots* alike are celibates, and the place resembles some mediæval monastery; but in the smaller institutions, a category to

The Sattr.

* For an account of the Mataks reference should be made to the Gazetteer of the Lakhimpur district.

which all the *sattras* in Nowgong belong, celibacy is not enforced and women and children are found living round the *namghor*. Hinduism is so liberal in Assam that in many of these colleges the presiding priest is a Kayastha, often no doubt a Kalita, and Assamese Brahmans are sometimes to be found who consent to accept as their spiritual guide a man of lower caste.

Statement A appended to this chapter shows the situation of each *sattr* in Nowgong, the date of its foundation, and the amount of land which is held on privileged terms. Though Kuruabahi is a comparatively small *sattr* and holds but a small area of land at privileged rates, it is one of the four premier *sattras* of Assam, the other three being Auniati, Dakshinpat, and Garamur. The founder of the three great *sattras* on the Majuli enjoined celibacy upon their inmates, but such an injunction obviously requires that provision should be made elsewhere for each succeeding generation of gosains. The people of Kuruabahi were accordingly allowed to marry, so that from their community priests could be obtained who had grown up amongst the traditions and surroundings of a *sattr* and who could be trusted to carry on the policy of their predecessors.

Muhammadanism.

Nowgong never came much under the influence of the Muhammadans, and in 1901 less than 5 per cent. of the population professed the faith of Islam. Nearly all of these persons were members of the Sunni sect.

The Muhammadans of Nowgong are said to be a fairly enlightened, if not a numerous community. The villagers

understand the principals of their faith, and it is still fairly free from Hindu superstitions. They try, however, to ascertain an auspicious day for the commencement of any undertaking, and sometimes consult a Hindu pandit for this purpose. They also observe the *nowai tolani* and *nowai* ceremonies, when a girl attains puberty or is married, and bathe their cattle on the occasion of the *Bihu*. A class of semi-Muhammadans called *dhakari* worship Bishohari the goddess of snakes. The Morias are a section of the Muhammadans who are said to be the descendants of 900 men who were taken prisoner when Turbuk was defeated in 1532. They were first employed to tend the Ahom elephants but offered grass to their tails instead of to their trunks. They were then ordered to grow paddy but they plastered the seedlings over with mud. They were finally made braziers, and at the present day are to some extent looked down upon by their co-religionists. Service is usually held in a small thatched hut, and there is no organized system for the propagation of the faith. In spite of this conversions occasionally take place, and the decrease amongst Muhammadans during the last decade was only 11 per cent. as compared with 25 per cent. in the district as a whole.

Nearly one-third of the population are still faithful Animism. to the primitive forms of tribal religion which are usually described as animistic, most of whom are living in the Mikir Hills or in the Raha tahsil and the mauzas to the south.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a

clear and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and these simple people are no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. But the way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small-pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can.

But, apart from special pujas of this nature, it is usually thought desirable to sacrifice at least once a year to the Deity to secure immunity from sickness and good harvests. Amongst the Hojais and Lalungs this sacrifice was invested with great ceremony, and the most acceptable of all offerings, human life, was made

prior to our occupation of the country. The connection between religion and morality is very slight, and the Lord their God is a jealous god, whose wrath must be averted by the proper offerings. Amongst the Mikirs success in theft is said to be due to skill in sacrifice, and though they believe in a future life, and have some idea of a special state of bliss, entrance to this heaven depends upon the somewhat peculiar qualifications of having danced the one legged dance and eaten the fat of the great lizard, and duck, pheasant, and cocoanut.

The Hojais on the other hand seem to be very doubtful as to the existence of a life beyond the grave and certainly do not trouble themselves very much about it.

The religions which were not strongly represented in the district in 1901, were Jains (243), Sikhs (214), ^{Minor religions} Buddhists (49), and Brahmos (7). The Jains are Kaiyas or Marwari merchants who have succeeded in securing a practical monopoly of the wholesale trade of the Assam Valley. Like the English, they are temporary visitors and have not permanently settled in the Province. The Sikhs are the descendants of soldiers who came for service to Assam about 1825 or a little later. The original settlers have inter-married with Kewats, Koches, and Kalitas, and all, except the latest arrivals from the Punjab, have now an admixture of Assamese blood. The majority have taken to agriculture but their community includes a few carpenters and contractors. They are found in the Singaon and Hatipara villages in the *sadr* tahsil and at Chaparmukh. Most of the Buddhists were censused on the railway, and the fact that they

were nearly all males, suggests that they were temporary visitors.

Christianity. The number of Christians in Nowgong is smaller than in any district in the Province except the Lushai Hills. A branch of the Baptist mission is located in Nowgong town, with an off-shoot in the Mikir Hills, and most of the native Christians were members of that sect.

**Number of
Native
Christians.**

1881 .. 204
1891 .. 354
1901 .. 496

From the statement in the margin it appears that Christianity has been spreading steadily if slowly amongst the natives during the past twenty years, but it is doubtful whether at present it has many attractions for the plains-men in Assam. The number of degraded castes is comparatively small, and, if the animistic tribesman once makes up his mind to abandon the religion of his fathers, he finds greater attractions from the social point of view in Hinduism than in Christianity. The gosains show considerable tact in the treatment of their converts, and do not expect them to abandon all at once the forbidden food to which for many generations they have been accustomed. The desire for material progress has not much hold upon the natives of Nowgong, and they prefer an idle opium eating life with the additional social distinction that Hinduism gives, to the more strenuous existence enjoined by the teaching of Christ's ministers.

Occupation.

Nowgong is a purely rural area and nine-tenths of the population in 1901 were supported by agriculture. As is only natural in a district in which there are broad tracts of land available for cultivation, the bulk of these

agriculturists are small farmers who hold direct from the state, and the number of tenants is inconsiderable. About one-twelfth of these cultivators were garden coolies, a proportion much lower than that prevailing in Darrang and Upper Assam. The only other occupation which supported as much as one per cent of the total population was general labour, a head which included the coolies engaged on the construction of the railway. The extraordinary preponderance of agriculture as a means of occupation is due to two causes. In the first place the district is a purely rural one. It contains only one small town, and the urban population is less than two per cent of the whole. There is moreover an almost complete absence of the functional castes. There is no village barber or dhobi in Assam Proper, and, though there are a considerable number of Jugis in Nowgong, they no longer earn their living at the loom. It would hardly be correct to say that they have forsaken their traditional occupation, as they, in common with most of the villagers in the district, are weavers; but the work is carried on by the women, and only enough clothing is produced to satisfy the requirements of the family, or perhaps to provide a few silk cloths to sell when money is urgently required. Occupation has not been specialized in the Assam Valley, and each household supplies almost all its simple wants. There are a considerable number of fishermen, but many of them have either abandoned their traditional occupation for agriculture, or have at any rate preferred to return it as a more respectable avocation

on the census schedules. The proportion of priests is fairly high, but that of teachers and village doctors low. Both the Assamese and hillmen are cultivators pure and simple. They have no aptitude for trade, no liking for the arts and crafts, no desire for any other means of livelihood than the plough and hoe. In the social as well as the material world great masses tend to attract the smaller units by their weight. It is the fashion amongst the natives of Nowgong to earn their living as Adam did. There is an abundance of land in the district, so that there is no reason why every man should not be in the fashion, and, as far as possible, he is.

At the census of 1901 the occupations of the people in Nowgong were divided into the following main classes.

			Total Number	Percentage.
Government	...	...	753	0
Pasture and agriculture	...	...	285,751	90
Personal services	...	...	2,867	1
Preparation and supply of material substances	...	...	8,906	4
Commerce, transport and storage	...	...	3,253	1
Professions	...	...	1,883	1
Unskilled labour, not agricultural	...	...	5,132	2
Means of subsistence independant of occupation	...	...	2,616	1

In the second part of the Census Report details will be found for the 520 separate heads into which the occupations of the people were divided, but in the immense majority of cases the figures are so small as to hardly repay examination.

**Marriage
customs.**

The forms of marriage in vogue are the *hompura** or

* A description of this ceremony as practiced in Assam will be found on p. 63 of the Census Report for 1901.

full Hindu rite, when the sacred fire is lighted and a priest is engaged to perform the ceremony; the *kharu moni pindha*, in which a feast is given to the friends and relations and ornaments are given to the girl; and the system under which the bridegroom, who is called a *caponiya*, enters the house of his prospective father-in-law, and works for his wife as Jacob worked for Rachel. Brahmans, Kayasthas, and well-to-do Kalitas invariably perform the *hompura* ceremony, which sometimes costs as much as Rs. 500. This expenditure is incurred on the purchase of ornaments and clothing, on the payments of priests, musicians, and palki bearers, and on a feast to the relations and friends, the principal ingredients of which are rice, molasses, curds, and betel nut.

The practice of taking a bride price is still fairly common amongst the lower castes, but it is falling into disfavour and is by no means as universal as in Kamrup. A girl can sometimes be obtained for Rs. 20, but, if she is an expert weaver and is generally skilled in house work, the parents will sometimes ask for and obtain five or six times that sum. An Assamese woman is a house keeper, weaver, and cook as well as a wife, and in many cases a farm labourer as well; and parents and guardians do not always see why a young man should be given such a valuable help-meet, when they have had the expense of feeding and clothing her when she was too young to work, and paying for the various ceremonies that are prescribed by local custom at certain stages of her career. If the price

demanded is too high the young people often take the law into their own hands, and the girl arranges to have herself abducted; as, when her lover has once obtained possession of her person, he is generally able to induce the parents to be more moderate in their demands. This form of marriage by capture is very common amongst the Nadiyals, Brittial Baniyas, and Charals or Namasudras; and, according to the mauzadar of Garubat, nine girls out of ten belonging to these castes are abducted in this manner. The *caponiya* is a person who works for his prospective father-in-law in lieu of making a cash payment for the bride. He is generally accorded all the privileges of a husband as soon as the parents of the girl are satisfied that he intends to remain faithful to his engagement. Marriage even by the simplest rites entails a heavy charge upon the bridegroom. Twenty rupees is the lowest estimate quoted by any of the officers consulted, and the ordinary cultivator often spends between one and two hundred rupees upon his wedding, a sum out of all proportion either to his capital or income. The result is that many men have to borrow at high rates of interest to obtain a wife, and are often crippled for years by the expenses incurred on the occasion of their marriage.

**Amusements
and festivals.**

Feasts, singing parties, and *bhaonas* or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the road side, and on a winter's morning the traveller who is early abroad, frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the

pleasure of the previous night. The *doljatra* or festival in honour of Krishna in February or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro, and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of his amorous exploits with the milkmaids of Brindaban, is observed indeed, but with much less ceremony than in other parts of India. On the gardens, however, and amongst the foreign cooly population this festival, which is styled the *fagua*, is an occasion of very boisterous merry-making. The Janmastami in honour of Krishna's birth in August or September, and the Sivaratri, in memory of Siva in March, are kept as fasts rather than feasts. The Durga Puja is observed by Saktists, but, as this sect has only a small following in Nowgong, it is not a local festival of much importance.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three *Bihus*, and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik *Bihu* is celebrated on the last day of Asvin (Oct. 14th), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of God, and in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry the people take cold food such as curds, molasses, plantains, and cold rice. The Magh *Bihu* is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (January 14th). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw piled round a central pole are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires which must be most acceptable to young and old alike, as at this

season of the year the morning are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh *Bihu* is to some extent a children's festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the young children who sing and dance, and feast in small grass huts that have been specially constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh *Bihu* which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th) is held in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil, mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice and are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relatives and present one another with cloths and other products of the country. Buffalo fights are organised in the rice fields but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. The villagers leap, wrestle, and race together and try to see who can run the furthest without drawing breath (*han khel*). Other games played are a kind of chevy and an Indian variety of tip cheese. Various games of ball, which include a good deal of wrestling and pushing, are also played. The festival is an occasion of some license, as boys and girls dance together in the fields and sing suggestive songs, and lapses from chastity between members of the same caste are considered almost venial. It is at this season of the year that run-away matches are most common, and during the next few weeks the outraged but avaricious parent complaining of the abduction of his daughter is by no means an uncommon sight in the local courts. The *sradh* ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August—September and that of Madhab three days before the Janmastami. All

work is laid aside on these days and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of hymns.

The temples of Nowgong are small and unimportant, **Temples.** and none of them have any pretensions to architectural merit. But this is nothing strange, as Saktism was never warmly accepted by the inhabitants of the district, and it is not to be expected that many shrines would be erected in its honour, or that those which existed would be carefully preserved. Statement B appended to this chapter shows the position of the various temples supported by grants of land. All except two, the temple at Kamakhya and the Sada Siva temple, are wretched temporary buildings of reeds and thatch.

Apart from the *sattras* and temples and the shrines **Other sacred places.** to which reference has been made in the account of the mountain system of the district, there are not many sacred places in Nowgong. There are the remains of a temple dedicated to Buragohain in the Bar Kolagaon forest in the Jagial mauza, and in the Namati mauza there is a sacred pool called the Akashi Ganga in Parkhoa village. Barduar in Dhing mauza is venerated as it was once the residence of Sankar Deb, and there is an altar to Mahadeo, which is still the scene of local sacrifices, in the Sahari mauza. Traces of the primitive form of Bodo worship are also to be seen near Silghat where there are some rock sculptures which are said to be sacred to Kechakhati, the savage goddess who delighted in the quivering flesh of the human victim, and to whom for many centuries a male without blemish was offered in the little copper temple near Sadiya.

STATEMENT A.

Sattras.

Mauza.	Name of Sattra.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Area of Nisfikhiraj land held.
	BRAHMAN GOSAINS.		Bighas.
Bhelenguri	Brahmachari	Bishambhar Brahmachari about 1775 A. D.	1,063
Chalchali	Harimisra	Madha Sargi Sarma ...	337
Dhing	Dumdumia	Bangshi Gopal Sarma about 1790 A. D.	583
Hatichong	Karassung	Parusuttam Deb about 1660 A. D.	1,222
"	Kuruabahi	Keshab Chandra Goswami about 1570 A. D.	605
Nowgong	Jakhalabandha	Krishna Deb Goswami about 1558 A. D.	...
	KAYASTHA GOSAINS.		
Chutial	Uppar Chutiai	Ram Chandra Mohunt about 1730 A. D.	29
Dandua	Kalsila	...	243
Dhing	Hatadraba Barhishya	Bam Datta Mohunt about 1775 A. D.	647
Hatichong	Do. Chotahishya	Chandibar Gosain about 1800 A. D.	497
	Aibheta	Ai Lakshmi Bewa widow of Kesho Rai about 1790 A. D.	...
Mikirbheta	Itakhuli	Bishnath Mohunt about 1800 A. D.	1,458
"	Kuji	Damodar Ata about 1660 A. D.	184
	Sukdal and	Bhogali Ata about 1755 A. D.	485
Pubtharia	Do. Sarubari	Padma Narayan Mahanta about 1775 A. D.	105
	Rupnaryan	...	107
		...	488

None of these *sattras* except Kuruabahi are of any great importance, and as has been already pointed out the bulk of the inhabitants of Nowgong are disciples of the gosains residing on the Majuli.

STATEMENT B.
Temples.

Mauza.	Name of Temple.	Name of founder and date of foundation.	Area of Nisikhiraj land held.
Barbhagia	Ambikanath	Behari alias Janardan Sarma about 1705 A. D. ...	Bighas. 485
"	Nandikisore	Not known	583
"	Saubhagya Madhab	Kadamba Sarma about 1730 A. D.	531
Pubtharia	Dulal Madhab	Kolia Thakur about 1730 A. D.	334
	Kamakhya	Kendu Koloi Barthakur in 1745 A. D.	632
Sadar Tahsil	Sadasib	Uma Maheswar about 1690 A. D.	421

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulses—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield and value of crops—Floods—Irrigation and attempts to improve the system of cultivation—Live stock—Grazing grounds—Cattle disease—Commencement of tea industry—Labour force—Soil—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Outturn and prices—Forests.

Crops grown The staple food crop of the district is rice which in 1902-03 covered 56 per cent. of the total cropped area. Other important crops are tea (5 per cent.), and orchard and garden crops (8 per cent.), but a large part of the area shown under this head, is occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Mustard occupied 19 per cent. of the total cropped area and til (*sesamum indicum*), which is grown much more extensively in Nowgong than in the other districts of Assam Proper, nearly one per cent. Miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, formed 6 per cent., and sugarcane 0·7 per cent. of the total. Wheat, barley, and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under

these three crops in 1902-03 was only 37 acres. Cotton is grown by the Mikirs in the hills, and covers an estimated area of about 2,000 acres. The area under this and other crops since 1901 is shown in Table VI. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice falls under three main heads *sali*, *ahu*, and *bao*, Rice. Sali. the proportion of the total rice area normally occupied by each of these three classes, being *sali* 51 per cent., *ahu* 30 per cent., and *bao* 19 per cent. *Sali* dhan or transplanted paddy, is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*palang*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, and is ploughed five or six times. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice fields in the proportion of about 1 to 15 or 20. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is sown broadcast over the bed in May and June, and during the time that this operation is going on, water is sprinkled over the bed from a bamboo scoop (*lahoni*). It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water,

are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles (*gosa*) to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls, each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, and the time of year at which the work is done. If the plants are transplanted early in the season, they can be placed at intervals of two feet, but later on the distance is reduced to nine inches. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off when they are removed from the nursery.

Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is generally carried out by women. The work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January, harvesting is going on. The women grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about 8 inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six to eight *muthis*

form a *thor* or *jhap*, and five or six *thors* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biriya*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the home-stead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main divisions *sali* proper, which is generally known as *bar* in other districts, and *lahi*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *sali* and, though the grain is of a finer quality, the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains, and are thus not fit for *sali*. Very little *sali* dhan is grown in the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra, *i.e.*, in the mauzas of Mayang, Gerua Bokani, Ghugua, and Juria, though in Dhing and Barbhagia there is a considerable area under this variety of rice.

Bao dhan is sown broadcast about the end of March, *Bao dhan.* the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sali*, and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of November and is harvested in the same way as *sali*. *Bao* dhan is generally sown in the intermediate tract which lies too low for the growth of *sali*, but is not so much exposed to flood as the riparian flats. Mikir-bheta and Hatichong are the two mauzas in which most *bao* is grown, but it is also sown in the higher parts of the *chapari* near the Brahmaputra. East and south of the Kalang there is very little *bao*.

Ahu dhan.

**Two kinds of
place where
ahu grown.**

Ahu dhan is usually sown broadcast, and is grown under two different sets of conditions. The greater part of the *ahu* raised is sown on the *chapolis* which fringe the Brahmaputra, and in the Gerua Bokani mauza, there are over 7,000 acres under this kind of rice. The usual procedure is as follows. In May the jungle is cut down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle, that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojola kata*, and ploughing begins in January. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown and the land again ploughed and harrowed to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high, and catch the wind (*botah boloah*), they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of July. The crop is, however, a precarious one and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is generally grown on the *chapolis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required when the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*).

and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the jungle has been cleared and after the third year, it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clear the old fields of weeds, while by a change of site, the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop. *Ahu* is sometimes sown in conjunction with *bao*, in the hope that if the earlier crop is destroyed, the longer stemmed and sturdier *bao* may at any rate survive. It is also sown on high land near the village site, again in conjunction with mustard. The soil is poor, but is manured with the sweepings of the courtyard and the cowshed.

Ahu is also occasionally transplanted, the system of cultivation employed being substantially the same as that in force for *sali*. It is sown about the middle of May, transplanted some six weeks later and reaped about the end of October. Transplanted *ahu* is generally grown on irrigated land, and is most commonly found in mauzas Bamuni, Kandali, Kathiatali and Kampur. The crop ripens earlier than *sali* and thus gives a quicker return on the labour expended in its production.

Mustard, as has already been said, is usually grown ~~Mustard.~~ in conjunction with *ahu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps dug out, and the land is ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the end of October and the plant is ready to be

pulled from the field about the middle of January. It is generally left to dry for a few days and is then tied in bundles, and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle.

Nearly one-third of the total mustard crop of the district is raised in the three mauzas of Mayang, Gerua Bokani, and Dhing, but the whole of the country lying between the Kalang and the Brahmaputra is a mustard growing tract. South and east of the Kalang, the area under this plant is inconsiderable.

Pulses.

Pulse is usually grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra in conjunction with summer rice and mustard, but a crop is often taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chaparis* if new land is taken up the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulse is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivators. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but as the grains do not separate readily from the pods, their

efforts are supplemented by a man armed with a bamboo staff. Several different kinds of pulse are grown but nine-tenths of the crop belong to the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo linn*), a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation, but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chaparis*. *Kala-mah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is grown but not in any considerable quantities. It has a large yield but does not fetch a high price. Another variety is the lentil *masur-mah* (*lens esculenta*) which is also grown on *chapari* land.

Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop Fibre. The plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use. Small patches of rhea (*bœhmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where they are heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

Cotton is grown by the Mikirs in the hills and is of two varieties. The large balled high growing cotton is

known as *bor kapah* (*gossypium neglectum*) while the smaller round balled species is termed *horu kapah* (*gossypium herbaceum*). The former is sown on level ground, has a comparatively small number of seeds, can be ginned more easily than the second variety, can be plucked twice a year, and bears for three seasons.

The *horu kapah* on the other hand yields only one crop in the year. Cotton is generally grown on hill sides covered with young saplings, which are cut during the cold weather, allowed to dry on the ground, and burnt in March or April. The ground is then hoed up, and the seed sown broadcast, generally in conjunction with that of other crops such as rice, *til*, maize chillies, mustard, or melons. The field is weeded, once or twice, and the crop ripens in November. Cotton requires rain when it is put into the ground to enable the seed to germinate, but afterwards it thrives best if it gets a good deal of sun, and heavy rain is liable to rot the stems. The average yield is about 150 lbs. per acre, and the produce is generally sold unginned, as the cost of labour is heavy in Nowgong and there is little demand locally for the seed. Most of the cotton grown in the district is raised in the Mikir Hills where it is estimated that there are about 3,000 acres under this plant.

Storage and
threshing of
grain.

The grain is usually stored as it is brought from the field in an out-house called *bhoral*. When it is required for use the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears have been

finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing the paddy is stored in huge drums, called *duli* or *mar*. They are made of split bamboo, and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs and, when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed, the whole plough is constructed on a

Agricultural
implements.
The plough

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, D. L. R. and A. showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes only to thresh out $7\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy.

larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

**Other imple-
ments.**

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by a mallet (*dheli mari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar, and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation, a large wooden rake (*bindha*) with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then

removed, and the pestle falls into a small hole, in a piece of wood which has been sunk level with the ground, in which the grain is placed. The *dheki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar (*ural*) and a pestle (*muri*). All of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown Sugarcane. on high land near the village site, and as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *teli* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangali*, a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The *malaka* is a hard and thin variety of the *mugi*, and, where grown, is planted round the edge of the field. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dal (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals,

and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between. Harvesting goes on from January to April, and during the winter nights and in the foggy mornings the drone of the sugarcane mill is heard coming across the fields in nearly every part of the Assam Valley where the "works of men" are to be seen.

**Preparation
of molasses.**

The native form of mill is still generally used for the extraction of the juice. It consists of two wooden rollers, fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam, supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skillful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the

rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected, boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potters' clay. Two of these vessels are placed about 9 feet from the furnace's mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition, it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*gholani*) shaped like a small dug-out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues, the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes: the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. But the first named factor is probably of most importance. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *alatia*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria*, and is particularly deep and soft. *Bherbheria* land is found at the lowest part of the rice basins, and is enriched by the drainage

Causes
affecting
productive-
ness of land.

from the village site. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality, and are generally only found in the *chapari*, and in the Bangkhang, Duar Salana, Jorabahi, Garubat and Jamunamukh mauzas. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptocorisa acuta*) and *chara* (*hispa acusceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug, which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and pushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *chara* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying*. Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Rain is wanted when *sali* rice

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris Green, 1 lb freshly slaked lime or flour and 150-gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

is sown and is transplanted but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *baq*. Sir W. Hunter† reports that about 1822 there was a wholesale destruction of the harvest by locusts, and that the price of paddy rose to the enormous height of Rs. 8 per maund. Locusts re-appeared in 1840 and sent up the price to Rs. 3-5-0 per maund, and in 1858 the visitations of other insects as well as locusts sent paddy up to Rs. 2-10-0 a maund. The authority for these statements is not quoted, and at the present day, Nowgong does not appear to be in any way specially liable to blight. The troubled condition of the country in 1822 would in itself be sufficient to account for the high price of grain. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefitted by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musca sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *monohar*, *cheni champa*, and *malbhog*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat

Garden
crops.
The plantain

† Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. I, P. 197.

smaller tree ; the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure ; but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep and are manured with cowdung, ashes and sweepings. Young saplings take from eighteen months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn into fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution, distilled from the sheaths and the corm, is often used in place of salt. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot, in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharpani*, is used as a relish, as a hair wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.

The betel nut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as ^{Other garden crops.} universally as the plantain, and, with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second, but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing, they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach *pui* (*basella alba*), *lahi*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos*

lablab), the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), the radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka say* (*rumex vesicarius*) and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*).

Yield and
value of
crops.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown.

		lbs.	yield per acre laid down by the
Sali	...	1,000	Agricultural Department after a
Ahu	...	800	long series of experiments. These
Bao	...	700	figures only represent a general
Mustard	...	550	mean and even in a normal year,
Molasses	...	1,800	

there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average about Rs. 1-4 to 1-8 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sali* is between 25 and 30 rupees, from one of *bao* between Rs. 17 and Rs. 21, and from one of *ahu* between Rs. 20 and Rs. 24. For mustard the villagers generally get from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 a maund, so that the yield from one acre is worth from 17 to 20 rupees. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place and ranges from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7-8-0 per maund.

The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from Rs. 110 to Rs. 165.

In many parts of Nowgong floods are a serious ob- **Floods.**
stacle to agriculture. The mauzas near the Brahmaputra are inundated in the rains, but this is merely one of the ordinary incidents of life, and the villagers overcome this difficulty by growing summer rice, which, if they are lucky, will be reaped before the floods are at their highest, and mustard which is sown after the waters fall. Further south the Kalang often overflows its banks after heavy rain and does some damage, while the Kapili and its tributaries are especially troublesome as they are liable to come down in strong and sudden freshets from the hills. It would be a difficult matter to regulate these rivers by protective works, and the population of the district is so sparse that no attempt has yet been made to reclaim any of the inundated tracts for permanent cultivation. The remains of embankments constructed in the days of native rule, are to be found in the Barbhagia and Juria mauzas and the Dhing road is said to afford some protection to the land lying on the west, but the time is not yet ripe for the construction of embankments on an extensive scale.

There are no great irrigation works in Nowgong, **Irrigation and attempts to improve the system of cultivation.**
or for the matter of that in any other part of the Province, and no attempt is made to water the crops from wells, but near the hills the people grow rice on high land above the reach of flood and bring the water of the hill streams through little channels on to their fields. These channels are constructed and

repaired by the villagers themselves, and are to be seen in the Kandali, Kathiatali, Duar Bagari, Bhatialgaon, Barbhagia, Bhelenguri, Chalchali, Namati, Jamunamukh, Rangkhong, Sahari, Uttarkhola, and Garubat mauzas. But they are not very numerous or very elaborate feats of engineering, and over the greater part of the district the aim of the cultivator is rather to protect his fields from flood than to attract the water to them. Manure is very seldom used, except for sugarcane and vegetables for which coudung and sweepings are employed, but land covered with jungle is of course fertilized by the ashes of the reeds standing on it. Little attempt has been made to introduce new crops, or to improve the existing staples except in so far as this is done by reserving the largest ears to act as seed, but in Kampur the cultivation of peas, wheat, and jute is said to be extending in the neighbourhood of the railway.

Live stock.
Buffaloes.

The buffaloes of the district belong to two distinct breeds, the Assamese and the Bengali.* The Assamese are the larger of the two and are fine upstanding animals with widely spreading horns. During the cold weather, they are generally grazed in jungly tracts and a wild bull often attaches himself to the herd, and becomes the sire of many of the calves. This continual infusion of a good strain of blood does much to maintain the excellence of the breed. The Bengali buffalo is a smaller and less imposing animal, and does not command so high a price, a bull

* The information given in these paragraphs is taken from a note compiled by Mr Darrah, Director of Land Records and Agriculture in 1887 and from reports received from the tahsildars and mauzadars in Nowgong.

costing from Rs. 25 to Rs. 30 and a cow from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. The price of the Assamese buffalo varies considerably in different portions of the district. Near the Brahmaputra, where large herds of these animals are kept by professional graziers, the bull fetches from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, the cow from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60, but in the Kapili valley the price rises to Rs. 40 to Rs. 60 for a bull and to Rs. 60 to 85 for a cow. Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portions of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half naked boy whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides, and who guides it with a nose-rope. In the *chaparis* the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputra, which separates them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too, as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a *simul* tree, which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home. At night each animal is fastened by a nose-rope to a post, and sleeps on the bare ground. A cow generally remains in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes when it ceases altogether.

The milk is very white and rich in fatty materials, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years; during which time they give birth, on the average, to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years.

Cattle.

Half starved, undersized, ill-bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly perhaps in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. No bulls are set aside to be the sires of the herd, and the cows are generally covered by a young and immature animal, who secures the object of his desires by his superior lightness and agility. The sire is often closely related to the dam and she, in her turn, has had her strength exhausted by being covered, when herself little more than a calf, and by subsequent breeding without the smallest intermission. The cattle are never groomed, and, when an epidemic breaks out no attempt is made to isolate the sick. "Everything," as Mr. Darrah says, "is left to nature, from the moment when the most active, and therefore probably the youngest bull of the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, until the progeny, after years of work and semi-starvation, dies neglected in some unfrequented jungle." If nasty, they have, at any rate, the merit

of being cheap and cows cost from Rs. 7 to Rs. 12, and bullocks, which are usually castrated when three years old, from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30.

In the cold weather there is generally plenty of grazing ground, and the animals are turned loose in the rice fields, or are driven away to swamps which are often covered with the most luxuriant grass. In the rains, when most of the country goes under water, fodder is not so easily obtained, and the cattle have to pick up a living as best they can on the high ground between the rice fields, and are stall fed on grass, and, in the more densely populated portions of the district, on straw. The difficulty becomes particularly acute in the *chapari mahals*, and in Gerua mauza they are said to be kept on artificial mounds of earth, which are thrown up near the homestead. On the other hand in the cold weather there is abundance of excellent grazing on the *chapari*, and in the six mauzas that fringe the Brahmaputra from Pubtharia to Mayang there were in 1903 no less than 42 separate *mokhutis*, or herds of buffaloes kept by professional graziers, the great majority of whom are Nepalese. Graziers are also fairly numerous in the tahsils, and there were 14 *mokhutis* both in the Raha and the *sadr* tahsil, and 9 in Samaguri. On the other hand in the Kapili valley, above its junction with the Jamuna, the professional grazer is unknown. This no doubt is due to the fact that the population is so sparse that there could be but little sale for milk, as in this portion of the district there is an abundance of good grazing ground, and the

cattle of the Kapili valley are said to be some of the finest in Assam.

**Goats and
sheep and
ponies.**

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out-house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, and the animals imported do not thrive. The total number in the district is extremely small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, endurance nor stamina. A census of the live stock in the district was taken in 1904, and disclosed the following results. Bull buffaloes 8,100 ; cow buffaloes 8,200 ; bulls and bullocks 69,900 ; cows 56,000 ; young stock 72,200 ; goats 31,000 ; sheep 213 ; horses and ponies 516. A fine breed of black swine are also kept by the animistic tribes.

**Cattle
disease.**

The most common forms of cattle disease prevalent in Nowgong are foot and mouth disease, rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea (*marki*), cholera, *matikhoa* the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight.

The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had traded in the Province in the time of the Ahom Rajas, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gun boats in 1824. In 1834 a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their members—Drs. Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were opened for the plant, a small establishment was entertained, under the general management of Mr. Bruce, to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea and cultivate them when discovered, and plants and seed were brought to Assam from China. Tea makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and, in the following year, some of the manufactured product was sent to England, where it met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which, at the present day, seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid ranging from 16 *s.* to £1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1*s.* 10½*d.*, to 2*s.* a lb.

Tea: commencement of the industry.*

* Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from

1. Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal, No. XXXVII. Papers relating to Tea Cultivation in Assam. Calcutta, 1861.
2. Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of Tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet. Calcutta, 1868.
3. Papers regarding the Tea Industry in Bengal. Calcutta, 1873.

**Tea in
Nowgong.**

Nowgong was, however, one of the last districts of the Assam Valley to attract the attention of the planter. In 1859, no tea was manufactured west of the Mikir Hills, and even the area planted out was not recorded. In 1872, the total area under mature plant was said to be 1,278 acres which yielded 363,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. Then ensued a period of some expansion and by 1882 the total area under plant both mature and immature had risen to 9,945 acres and the yield to 3,253,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. But the district continued to be unpopular in planting circles. During the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the tea industry in Tezpur, Sibsagar, and Lakhimpur advanced by leaps and bounds, but in Nowgong it made little progress. In 1900, there were only 12,673 acres under plant which yielded 4,330,000 lbs. of the manufactured article or a little more than one-seventh of the total outturn of the Sibsagar district. Statistics for later years will be found in Table VI. Most of the gardens are situated near the western slopes of the Mikir Hills, stretching from a point east of Nowgong town towards the Brahmaputra. Details for each garden will be found in statement A in the Appendix.

**Labour
force.**

The industry is for the most part worked with imported labour, and in the ten years ending with 1890, 18,837 coolies were brought up to the plantations. The importations in the next decade were 25,610 the largest number (5,320) arriving in 1897, when famine was raging in the recruiting districts. Details for later years will be found in Table VI.

The abstract in the margin shows the areas from			which the labour force in
	Number	Percentage.	
Total ...	20,263		1901 had been recruited.
Assam ...	5,320	26	Assam itself is largely
Chota Nagpur	5,878	29	represented but a consider-
Other parts of			able proportion of those
Bengal ...	2,332	12	born in Assam are the chil-
United Pro-			dren of immigrant coolies.
vinces ...	271	1	
Central Pro-			
vinces ...	5,662	28	

The journey from the recruiting districts is troublesome and expensive, the class of persons capable of working successfully in the damp climate of Assam is limited, and of recent years the supply of labour available has not been sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the planters. Special Acts have been passed to regulate the relations between the employers and their labour force. Careful provision is made for the welfare of the coolie. He is housed in neat and comfortable lines, usually far superior to the dwellings occupied by persons of that class outside the gardens, he is provided with an excellent water supply, generally drawn from masonry wells, and when sick he is cared for in a comfortable hospital by a native doctor working under the supervision of a European medical man. The provision of all these comforts and the importation of the labourers themselves cost large sums of money, which no one would be willing to expend without some guarantee that the coolies, when imported, would consent to remain on the plantation. This protection is afforded by the law, (Act VI of 1901) which lays down that a labourer, provided that he is

well-treated, must not leave the garden to which he is indentured before the expiry of his contract, unless he chooses to redeem it by a money payment.

Soil.

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which, in its natural state, is covered with tree forest is usually considered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows, either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is deficient.

Varieties of plant.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised: Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width; the Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety; Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide; and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom

exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety.

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life little more is required than to keep the plantation cleared of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains, they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year, only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning, and any unhealthy or stunted branches removed. As an extreme remedy old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is

System of
cultivation.

hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, the hoed-up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes of temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are occasionally spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable, and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view.

Plucking begins in April, and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a "flush," and there are usually five or six full "flushes" in a season, though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

**System of
manufacture**

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about twenty hours,

but if it is cold and wet from thirty to forty hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about forty minutes, and after this the leaf is placed in a cool room for about three and a half hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe, and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass are, orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, souchong and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

The character of the outturn depends largely upon the season, but still more upon the garden and the Outturn and prices.

system of manufacture followed. In 1868 the Commissioners estimated that the average outturn was about 240 lbs. per acre; but this estimate was probably too low, as the average yield in Nowgong during the five years ending with 1903 was 350 lbs. per acre. The introduction of machinery, and the improvement of the general system of cultivation and management, have rendered it possible to effect a large reduction, in the cost of the tea when placed upon the market. In 1868 it was calculated that tea must be sold at two shillings a lb. to yield a profit. Twenty years later the average price obtained by tea from the Brahmaputra Valley was 8 annas 2 pies, and, though in 1894 it rose to 10 annas 5 pies, in 1898 it dropped to 6 annas 9 pies, and has since remained below that figure.

Forests.

The forests of Nowgong fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which in 1902-03 covered an area of 142 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which in the same year occupied the enormous area of 3418 square miles. Unclassed state forest is however, simply Government waste land, and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy *chur*, or a huge expanse of low-lying land covered with high grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former holder, and has not yet been settled with any other

person ; or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, *i.e.*, actual tree forest. It is impossible to give even the roughest estimate of the proportion of unclassified state forest, which is actually under timber, but where the total area is so enormous it is obvious that, in a country with a heavy rainfall like Assam, the area covered with trees must be considerable.

The management of the Government reserves is usually entrusted to an extra Assistant Conservator of Forests, who has a sanctioned staff of two deputy rangers, one forester, and twenty-one head guards, and guards. Settlement holders are allowed to take from unclassified state forests, any forest produce required for home consumption other than live reserved trees, free of royalty. System of
management

Sonaru (*cassia fistula*), ajhar (*lagerstrœmia reginæ*) titasapa (*michelia champaca*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*) and gomari (*gmelina arborea*) are the most valuable trees found in unclassified state forests, the first four being used for the construction of dug-out canoes which are floated down the Kapili, Jamuna, and Barpani to Chaparmukh where they are purchased by traders from Goalpara and Gauhati.

From Table VIII it will be seen that the bulk of the timber sold in Nowgong is obtained from unclassified state forests, and that the reserves are hardly touched. The Diyu valley forest, which lies a few miles south-east of Kaliabar, is in fact, the only one from which any appreciable revenue is at present raised, and the remaining 134 square miles of reserved forest

only yielded a revenue of Rs. 883 in 1903. These forests are too remote to attract the Bengal trader, but now that the railway has been completed through the North Cachar Hills, it is possible that purchasers may come from the Surma Valley, where there is a brisk demand for timber. In addition to the trees already mentioned they contain sal (*shorea robusta*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*) poma (*cedrela toona*) nahor (*mesua ferrea* and koroï (*albizzia procera*). Details for each reserve will be found in Table VII. Minor articles of forest produce from which revenue is raised are bamboos, canes, rubber, lac, and agar (*aquilaria agallocha*), but the most important item of all are the fees levied on the professional graziers who herd their buffaloes in the jungles.

The expenditure incurred on forests in Nowgong is certainly not high, but as will be seen in Table VIII, it not unfrequently exceeds the revenue obtained.

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Industries—Silk—Weaving—Pottery—Brass and bell-metal—Lac—Mat-making—Fishing.

Apart from tea and the production of silk thread ^{Industries.} and lac, there are no industries of much commercial importance in Nowgong. In almost every house there is a loom, but the cotton cloth produced is generally required for home consumption, and is very seldom sold. A few up-country men express oil from mustard seed, using for the purpose the ordinary bullock mill of Upper India; and Bengalis, Mikirs and Kamars make daos, sickles and knives from imported iron. In the following paragraphs some account is given of such industries as exist.

Three different kinds of silk are produced in the ^{Pat silk.} district. The most valuable kind is known as *pat*, and is obtained from the cocoon of two species of worms, the univoltine or *bar polu* (*bombyx textor*) and the multivoltine or *saru polu* (*bombyx crasi*). Both kinds are reared indoors on the leaves of the mulberry tree (*morus indica*), or where mulberry is not obtainable, on the *panchapa*. The eggs of the *bar polu* take ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the

beginning of January. The life of the worm lasts from thirty to forty days, and the cocoon takes about six days to spin. The cocoons are of a bright yellow colour, but the silk, when boiled in potash water, become perfectly white. From twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are required to yield one pound of thread, which is worth from Rs 8 to Rs. 12. The thread obtained from the *saru polu* is not so valuable as that of the *bombyx textor*, but as the worm yields four broods in the year, it finds greater favour with the cultivators. *Pat* silk is, however, only made to order and the total quantity produced is very small.

Several causes combine to make this silk rare and expensive. The Jugis are the only caste who will consent to rear the worm, and, as the insect is looked upon as impure, the industry is probably regarded with disfavour even by the Jugis. The supply of mulberry leaf is limited, and the worms are very delicate, a large number of them dying before they spin.

Muga,

The *muga* worm (*antheræa assamæa*) is generally fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*). Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in the Nowgong district the only broods commonly reared are the *katia* in October—November, the *jarua* in December—February, and the *jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males who are allowed to

remain at liberty. Each female produces about 250 eggs, which are placed in a dark place, and when the worms appear, they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger. In colour it is green with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin they descend the tree and are then removed to the house. Most Assamese women possess one or more garments of *muga* silk, and well-to-do men wear waist cloths of this material on occasions of ceremony. *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use and very little is produced for sale. The principal centres of cultivation are at Barghat, Panigaon, Nanai, Jhagari, and Baropujia. The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of which yield one ounce of thread. The price obtained is from 6 to 8 annas per ounce.

The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from eri silk. the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year, those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As

with the *muga* moth, the females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread.

The *Eri* worm is regarded as impure by the higher castes and its cultivation is restricted to Lalungs, Kacharis, Nadiyals, Haris, Namasudras or Charals, and other low caste people. The places in which the thread is produced in the largest quantities are the Baropujia, Mikirbheta, Dhing, Kandali, and Kathiatali mauzas; the best markets for *eri* cloth are the ones at Jaluguti, Phulaguri, Gobha, and Barpani.

Cost of silk cloths. The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bar kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to

Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats. Women's clothes, both petticoats and the shawls worn over the bust, are, however, usually made of *muga* silk, the thread required for a complete dress costing from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7. The instruments used for twisting and weaving silk are the same as those employed for cotton, but for *eri* thread a stronger reed is employed.

The weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich Weaving. and poor alike, and one or more looms are to be seen in the courtyard of almost every house. Though cotton is grown in the hills, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in the forests, imported yarn, which is supplied in the requisite shades by the village shop-keeper, is usually employed. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5' 10" × 2' 6", and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam," published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. The total cost of the whole apparatus is from ten to fifteen rupees, and as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home-made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very little cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that,

weaving as an industry is commercially a failure, the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *gamchas* or napkins, often worn on the head, large sheets or shawls worn as wraps, called *chadar khandia* or *bar kapor*, and smaller shawls called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called *paridia kapor* is very finely made and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200.

Pottery.

The pottery produced is of a very rough and simple character, and most of the potters combine this occupation with agriculture. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff, some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves, the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin about 16 inches long by 3½ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots, water jars, vessels in which rice is boiled (*thali*), and larger vessels (*hari* and *jaka*) with lamps, pipes, and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry are at the following villages :—Charalgao and Kumargao in Khatoalgao mauza, Kumargao in Kachamari mauza, Potani, Dharamtul, and Nanai Kumar.

The brass and metal industry is not of much importance. Bell-metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then smeared over

Brass and
bell-metal.

the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls, often used as drinking cups (*lota, bati*), jars for holding water (*kalsi, gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes to carry betel-nut and lime (*tema, temi*), and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali*). The chief centres of the industry are at Kuwarital, Raha, Jagial, Samaguri, Moriagao in Barbhagia mauza, Sutar-gao in Khatoalgao mauza, and at Kahargao in the Raha tahsil, but the number of these artizans is very small.

Lac.

The lac industry is almost entirely in the hands of the Hill Mikirs and Hill Lalungs, and most of the stick lac produced comes from mauza Rangkhong, and to a certain extent, from Duar Amla. The insect is reared on various members of the ficus family, and on arhar (*cajanus indicus*), but as far as is known, the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which it has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows. Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days, the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months, and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. A good sized tree yields from 30 seers to 2 maunds of stick lac, the best results being obtained from trees of moderate growth, which do not contain too rich a supply of sap. Two crops are generally obtained in the year, the first being collected in

May and June, the second in October and November. The first crop is largely used for seed, and it is the second which supplies the bulk of the exported lac. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Almost all the lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac, but the hill tribes occasionally extract the dye which they require for their own use, by placing the lac in a wooden mortar, pouring boiling water over it, and pressing it with a pestle.

The Nowgong mats are of three kinds *kath*, *dhari*, Mat-making and *pati*. The *kath* mats are woven in a wooden frame and the industry is not confined to any special caste. The better kinds, which are made from the *kuhila* plant (*aeschynomene aspera*) fetch from four annas to ten rupees according to size. A cheaper variety made from *murtha* (*marantha dichotoma*), and *hogal*, (*typha angustifolia*) only cost from two annas to a rupee. The following villages are noted for the manufacture of these mats, Bardoa, Baropujia, Dighaldari, Kaliabar, Kathiatali, and Morakalang. The *dhari* mats are made from strips of bamboo by Mikirs, Lalungs, and Kacharis in the hill mauzas. The price varies from two annas to two rupees according to size. The manufacture of *pati* mats is almost entirely restricted to the Patias, a section of the Kewat caste. They are made from *patidoi* (*clinogyne dichotoma*) but are not so neatly finished off as the *sitalpati* mats of Sylhet

and Bengal, and cost from four annas to five rupees. The principle centres of the industry are Nowgong, Baropujia, Raha, and Kathiatali.

Jhapi.

The *jhapi* is the national hat of the Assamese and is made in every district of the valley, but the hats of Nowgong are noted for the elaborate character of the decoration and the excellence of the finish. The *jhapi* is made of bamboo and the leaves of the *takau* palm (*livistonia jenkinsiana*). The general principle is invariably the same. The head is inserted into a circular and conical erection about five inches high, which rises from a broad flat brim, but with regard to the breadth of this brim considerable latitude is allowed. The largest varieties of *jhapi* are about four feet in diameter, and are generally held over a lady or a priest to protect them from the sun. The hats that are actually worn, are usually about two feet in diameter. The foundation consists of strips of bamboo arranged horizontally and vertically at intervals of about two inches. On this is laid a small neat mesh-work of tiny bamboo slips, which supports the *takau* leaves which form the actual protection against sun and rain. Similar mesh-work on the top keeps the leaves in position, and the whole is decorated with strips of red and blue cloth, silver braid, and little balls of thread. These ornamental hats are known as *sorudoia jhapis*, and are generally worn by women, and more especially by Muhammadans and by members of the lower Hindu castes such as the Nadiyals and Brittial Baniyas. The ordinary *jhapi* for common use is known

as *dhoriah*, and the cheapest form of hat, worn by ploughmen to protect them from the sun and rain, as *halwah*. The best *jhapis* are made at Kandali, Uriagaon, Jagi, and Kathiatali, the price ranging from four annas for the cheapest and commonest variety to five rupees for the better kinds. Sieves and baskets are made in every part of the district out of split bamboo. Each villager generally makes enough to satisfy his own requirements, and they are not usually bought or sold.

Fish is caught for home consumption by every section Fishing. of the community, but Doms or Nadiyals and the Charals or Namasudras are the only Hindu castes who will catch it for sale. The result of their labours is generally disposed of locally, and curing is only undertaken by Kacharis, Lalungs, and Mikirs who sell a little dried fish at the Jiajuri, Tapatjuri, Rangalu, Neli, Khola, and Amchoi *hats*. The varieties which are most esteemed for the table are:—the roe (*labeo rohita*), the chital (*notopterous chitala*), the ari (*arius*), the magur (*clarias magur*), the pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*) and the hilsa (*clupea ilisha*). The nets most commonly in use are (1) the *Ghakata* a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water. (2) the *Khewali* a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached while all round the edges there are weights. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides together. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank, and any fish that may have been swimming

in the water over which it has been cast are entangled in the pockets round the edge. The following names are applied to this net as the mesh decreases in size, *regh*, *afalia*, *duangulia*, *angatha*, and *ghan khewali*. (3) The *langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *tana langi* is a smaller variety the two ends of which are brought round to form a circle as the net is not long enough to reach across the river. (4) The *parangi*, a square net the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout post to which the bamboos are attached, and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. (5) An *uthar* is a large *khewali* which is worked on the same principle, but as it is too heavy to be thrown by hand, it is spread on the surface of the water from a boat. A variety of this net with especially large meshes is called a *batihal*. (6) A *ghat-jal* is fastened to a bamboo staging above the water, and is raised and lowered on the lever principle. There are various kinds of wicker traps in use. The one most commonly employed is called a *polo* and resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem, and is used by a fisherman who walks through shallow water and keeps pressing the rim on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *juluki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *jakai* is a species of wicker work shovel, which is either dragged along the bottom or placed on the ground to

catch the small fry who take refuge in it when the mud is trampled up. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa*, and *gui* and are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

The Government fisheries are put up to auction; the most important being:—(1) The Kalang, (2) the Pota Kalang *bil*, (3) the Mora Kalang *bil*, (4) the Samaguri *bil*, (5) the Rupahi, (6) the Mecha *bil*, (7) the Kuji *bil*, (8) the Udori *bil*, (9) the Khonaghoria *bil*, (10) the Sondora *bil*, (11) the Kapili, (12) the Sonai, (13) the Tetelisara, (14) the Barpeta *bil*, (15) the Bor Ran-mari *bil*, and (16) the Kola Duar *bil*.

Altogether they realized upwards of Rs. 11,000 in 1903, the lessees recouping themselves by charging the professional fisherman who have recourse to their *mahal* rates, varying from one to twenty rupees per net. Villagers who only catch fish for their own consumption are treated very liberally and only pay a fee of four annas per annum. Figures for subsequent years will be found in Table XII.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE,
COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWN,
AND LOCAL BOARD.

Rent—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of people—Indebtedness—Sources from which villagers obtain cash—Social restrictions—Communications—Development of steam navigation—Railway—Roads—Waterways—Post and Telegraph—Commerce and trade—Municipality—Local Board.

Rent. When land is sublet the rent is paid either in cash or in kind, the former system is known as *sukani* or *khandua*, the latter as *adhi*. Under the *chukti adhi* system the tenant contracts to deliver a fixed quantity of grain irrespective of the character of the harvest, but the more usual procedure is for the tenant and the landlord to divide the crop. The following description of the different forms of *adhi* tenure is taken from a note by Mr. Basu, Assistant to the Director of Land Records and Agriculture:—

“The commonest form is *adhi* proper, in which the crop is divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. The produce may be divided either before reaping (*gach-adhi*), in which case the standing crop is divided in the field, each party reaping his own share; or after the tenant has cut the crop (*dal-adhi*) when the bundles (*danguris*) are equally divided; or after the tenant has cut and threshed the crop (*guri-adhi*) when the grain is divided. All work prior to the act of division and expenses

incidental thereto are borne by the tenant. The seed grain alone is, as a rule, found by both parties in equal shares, and if one party has advanced it in the beginning, one bundle of paddy per *bigha* is deducted from the whole in payment of the advance, and the remainder is then divided equally between the landlord and the tenant. There is still another kind of division in which the tenant undertakes to cultivate the land up to the stage of the puddle (*boka-adhi*), when the land is divided in equal parts, each party transplanting his share with the own seedlings and at his own cost.

In every form of *adhi*, the Government dues are paid by the landlord. As a rule, it is only good productive lands which can be let on *adhi* tenure, particularly on the *chukti* and *guri* forms of the tenure. In *adhi* tenure, no extra payments are called for. Cash paying tenants, however, are often called upon to pay various perquisites which go to swell the nominal rent due. The most common is gratuitous labour for a certain number of days in the year. This is ordinarily the case with all tenants holding temple lands. Not unoften the rent is partly, and in some cases, wholly remitted in consideration of labour to hereditary tenants who are descendants of former *paiks* attached to the temple."

Statistics of subtenancy were compiled in 1899-1900 and are summarised in the following abstract :—

Total settled area for which returns compiled. Acres.	Total area sublet. Acres.	Area paying produce rents. Acres.	Area paying cash rents. Acres.
181,900	9,597	1,009	8,588

It will be seen that only 5 per cent. of the settled area for which statistics were collected was sublet, and that a little less than a ninth of the area sublet was held on *adhi* terms. In the great majority of cases the cash rent paid did not exceed the Government revenue demand upon the land. This is only natural as it is obvious that land cannot have a high subletting

value in a district like Nowgong, where there are great expanses of Government waste, and considerable areas which have actually been brought under the plough, but have been abandoned owing to the ravages of *kala-azar*. According to the census the number of tenants in Nowgong, both workers and dependants was 3,322 in 1891 and 5,600 ten years later.

Wages.

There is really no such thing as a labouring class in Nowgong, and in 1891, when no railway work was going on, only 1,049 persons described themselves as being supported by earthwork or general labour. Members of the lower Hindu castes and of the aboriginal tribes will occasionally work for hire, but all the local revenue officers report that year by year the difficulty of obtaining servants or labourers, which was at all times great, is steadily increasing. The daily wage in the more densely populated portion of the district, *i.e.*, along the banks of the Kalang from Silghat to Raha, varies from five to six annas, but elsewhere it is generally about one anna lower. Harvest work is paid for at lower rates, while work on the railway commands a wage of at least eight annas a day. This curious difference is probably due to the imperative necessity of getting in the harvest, while railway work is optional, and, as it is done for foreigners, is probably regarded as involving a certain loss of social status. In the Garubat mauza, a ploughman who brings his own plough and buffalo gets ten annas, or, if he only uses bullocks, six annas a day, a rate considerably higher than that reported from the

neighbouring mauza of Kampur. Carpenters and masons are said to get one rupee, and blacksmiths thirteen annas a day. The number of these artizans is, however, quite insignificant, and in quoting a rate of wages for the district it must always be borne in mind that labourers cannot as a rule be obtained at all except through the intervention of some individual possessed of local influence.

The price of rice, the staple food grain, is subject to marked fluctuations, and the total volume of business done in Nowgong town, the place where returns are recorded, is so small that they do not afford a very reliable indication of the real condition of the market. Prices.

The statement in the margin shows that there has been a general rise in price, which has, however, been subject to marked variations, as rice, for instance, was very much cheaper in 1900 than it was either in 1879 or even so long ago as 1865.

	Seers purchaseable for a rupee.
1862	.. 20
1865	... 12
1867	... 20
1879	... 9
1889	... 16
1897	... 7
1900	... 15

The average price in each of the four decades ending with 1872, 1882, 1892, and 1902, was seventeen, fourteen, fourteen, and eleven seers. During the last decade the district has been passing through a period of extreme depression. *Kala-azar* was raging, the people died like sheep, and the survivors could hardly be expected to grow more grain than was absolutely necessary. Apart from this the seasons were unfavourable and the actual harvests were unusually poor. A gradual rise of prices has no

doubt been going on, but it is not so pronounced as the averages recorded would at first suggest. The price of pulse has also been rising since 1880, but there has been a considerable decrease in the price of salt. Now-gong like the rest of Assam has never suffered from famine since the days of British rule. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table IX.

**Food and
dress.**

The staple food of the people is boiled rice, eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi*, which is not very largely used. Goat's flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, and is frequently procurable, especially in times of flood, when the deer are driven on to the higher ground and are ruthlessly slaughtered from boats. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and *ghi*. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhuti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper, and sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a scarf tied round the bust, and a shawl. Amongst the Assamese these cloths are generally home-made, and in the case of the women and of the large wraps used in the cold weather by men are frequently of silk. Men and women alike generally go bare headed, but the former sometimes twist a handkerchief round their heads, and on sunny or rainy days both sexes have recourse to the broad brimmed *jhapi*.

Boots and shoes are the exception, and in their own homes even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp-pointed grass.

The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses, almost huts, and in a corner there are generally two open sheds, one of which contains a loom, while the other serves the purpose of a cow-house. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The general effect is extremely picturesque, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the homestead very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back there is usually a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and must be very hot in summer, and as they are built on low mud plinths, must be extremely damp. The walls are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the roof of thatch, the rafters and posts of bamboo. All of these materials can as a rule be obtained free of charge, and a house costs the owner nothing but the trouble of erecting it, but in spite of this they are small and badly built. The houses of the middle class are built on practically Dwellings.

the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell-metal utensils, and bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old cloths, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses, but these articles of luxury are seldom found outside the town. This style of house is common to all the Assamese, but in the flooded tracts there are none of the graceful areca palms, as the tree cannot thrive if the roots remain long under water. These orchards and gardens are a considerable source of wealth to the cultivator, and a house standing on a bare patch of ground, has always a somewhat poverty stricken appearance to eyes accustomed to the luxuriant vegetation in which the typical Assamese cottage is embedded. The aboriginal tribes nearly always build on platforms or *machans*, and as they keep pigs and fowls they seldom have good gardens round their houses.

Economic
condition of
people.

There are no rich men amongst the Assamese in Now-gong, and very few who are even moderately well-to-do, but the explanation of this fact is not far to seek. The Assamese is a cultivator and nothing more, and with wholesale trade, crafts, and industries, he has little or no concern. Practically the whole of the profits of the external trade of the district pass into the hands of the Marwari merchants, and, though large sums of money

were expended by the Assam Bengal Railway Company in Nowgong, coolies and contractors alike were foreigners, and the profits of capital and the wages of labour passed into foreign hands. Farming on a large scale is impossible owing to want of capital and the absence of a labouring class, and the immense mass of the peasant proprietors are petty cultivators, who drive the plough themselves and carry home the rice that has been cut by their wives and daughters. Such a community can never become rich, but it is well removed above the line of poverty, and it is seldom that any villager in Nowgong goes hungry to his bed. Along the banks of the Kalang, the people have as a rule good gardens, which are a considerable source of wealth. Their rice fields are above flood level and are not liable to be destroyed by sudden inundations, but on the other hand, there is a certain amount of pressure on the soil. On the *chapari* there is an abundance of waste land, but the floods of the Brahmaputra render the crop precarious, and prevent the growth of betel nut and other fruit trees.

The principal charges upon the indigenous inhabitants of Nowgong are, land revenue, local rates, and opium. In 1902-03, these three items amounted to Rs. 7,57,000, rather more than one-third of which had to be debited to the head of opium. The mustard crop in that year must have been worth to the villagers at least Rs. 7,76,000, so that from this crop alone they could meet all the demands made on

them by the state.* The people in the hills obtain money by the sale of lac and cotton, and the garden coolies put a considerable amount of cash in circulation. On June 30th, 1903, there were some 12,000 adult coolies in the district, who probably spent on the average about Rs. 2-8 per mensem on poultry, vegetables, and rice sold to them by the villagers, or about Rs. 3,00,000 in the year. There is a growing taste for the use of imported articles of food and dress, and the demands made upon the raiyats' purse are heavier than they were half a century ago, when the absence of any means of communication except country boats rendered it far from easy, either to buy or sell. The price of wives and the cost of the wedding ceremony is said to be increasing, a fact which points to an increase in the amount of cash in circulation, as the Indian vendor is very prone to adapt his price to what he considers to be the capacities of the purchaser. The increasing difficulty in obtaining labour also suggests a general advance in the position of the people.

**Indebted-
ness**

At the same time the various revenue officers report that more than half the village population are in debt. Indebtedness is said to be quite the exception in Kam-pur. In Gobha and Churaibahi only about one-fourth of the population are involved, and in the Raha and Samaguri tahsils one-third, but elsewhere the proportion ranges from one-half to three-fourths. But generalizations of this kind must, obviously, be received with

* The normal yield has been ascertained to be about 550 lbs. per acre, and it has been assumed that the mustard is sold for Rs. 2-8-0 per maund, an estimate, which, if any thing is unduly low. Against this must be set the fact that no deduction has been made for seed or for mustard consumed locally.

caution. The raiyats are very ready to descant on their poverty to all who turn an attentive ear, and it is doubtful whether they are as much in debt as they would fain appear. The system of taking advances on the crop, especially on the mustard crop, seems to be very common, but in many cases, no doubt, the necessity for taking these advances might be avoided by the exercise of a little thrift, industry, and foresight. It is difficult to believe that the indebtedness of the villagers can be very serious, as, apart from the standing crop, they have but little security to offer. The rate of interest charged is said to vary from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 75 per cent., the lenders being usually kaiyas or foreign traders.

The villagers obtain the cash required for the payment of land revenue from the sale of paddy, mustard, pulse, vegetables, and poultry. In the Langpher mauza they take work on the railway or hollow out canoes, and here and there raiyats are to be found who actually consent to work upon the roads, but the number of such persons is extremely small. The standard of comfort is distinctly low, but this seems to be chiefly due to the apathy and indolence of the people. Their houses cost them nothing but the trouble of erecting them, but they are dark, squalid, and ill-ventilated, and a strong disinclination to incur any unnecessary trouble is a marked characteristic of the Assamese. Mr. Melitus, the Commissioner of the Valley, reports that the average villager will ordinarily only cultivate as much land as is absolutely necessary and no more, and that this is not merely his personal opinion, but one that is shared by the local re-

Sources
from which
villagers
obtain cash.

venue officials, and by almost all officers with Assam experience from the time of General Jenkins and General Hopkinson to the present day. Under these circumstances it is not to be expected that there will be much of comfort or luxury amongst the Assamese or any considerable accumulations of capital.

**Social
restrictions.**

The following are some of the restrictions imposed by custom on the daily life of the people. Villagers will not plough on the day of the new moon or full moon, or the eleventh day after either of these dates. In places they decline to pay revenue on Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays, or Fridays, or to give loans of money or paddy on those days. There is a curious local diversity in this particular, as though Saturday, Monday, and Wednesday seem to be inauspicious days for any kind of business in almost every part of the district, in Kam-pur, Saturday, Tuesday, and Thursday are days on which no man pays his revenue; and in Kachamari, Sunday too is barred. There is thus not a single day in the week which is considered auspicious for the payment of revenue in every part of the district. In Pubtharia, it is said that the people will not build their houses, catch fish, or sow mustard on Mondays and Wednesdays, and in Juria, Dandua, and Tetelia, Saturdays and Tuesdays are considered to be inauspicious days on which to sow. In Gerua fencing must not be erected on Mondays, floors prepared on Tuesdays, or straw cut on Saturdays. All castes catch fish, but only Jaliya Kai-barttas, Nadiyals, Namasudras or Charals, and the aboriginal tribes will sell it, and the preparation and sale of

dried fish is eschewed even by the Hindu fishing castes. The *pat* worm is only reared by the Katani subdivision of the Jugi caste, and all the Assamese have a strong prejudice against hiring themselves out as labourers, especially if they are to be employed by Government. They are very scrupulous in many ways, object to the use of well-water, and the fear that his cart might be hired by a European and have a piece of beef or a fowl or two put in it, has been put forward by a villager before now, as a sufficient reason for not embarking in the carting business.

The communications between Nowgong and the outside world have passed through five distinct stages of development:—the country boat, the Government steamer, the private cargo steamer, the daily steamer service, and the railway. The country boat was the legacy we received from the days of native rule. It had served the Ahom princes well enough, they possessed a numerous and well appointed fleet, and as they had no wish to see foreigners in the valley of the Brahmaputra, and little desire to travel out of it themselves, it was nothing to them that Nowgong was many weeks journey from the sea.

But when the British came into possession of Assam, the difficulty of communications proved at first to be a most serious obstacle to the development of the Province. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business.

Communica-
tions.
Remoteness
of Nowgong.

Early
difficulties.

McCosh, writing in 1837,* stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post, which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days and Bishnath in three days more.

Few people, presumably, had sufficient time or patience to undertake the voyage at the rainy season of the year. Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his tedious way, his view bounded as a rule by high banks of treacherous sand, which then as now were continually being undermined by the current and falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley, the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot, and the tedium of this dreary voyage must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort.

Beginning
of steam
navigation.

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the Valley, but in 1848, the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that, three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the Valley to Dibru-

* Topography of Assam, pages 9 and 82.

garh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department, on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure, but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made with results that were not unsatisfactory even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary contrast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a country boat, and the facilities afforded were fully appreciated by the commercial community in Assam. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers, and in 1855, Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins complained, that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected, the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand, the accommodation was designed on an extremely liberal scale. The regulations issued in 1851 expressly authorized passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that, they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases, a proviso which suggests a very deliberate

voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seems to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati, but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats, to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but in spite of this, it showed a fair profit, and it was evident, that there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

Private
steamers put
on the river.

In 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks, provided that the Government boats were taken from the line, and, since that date, the steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company, with whom they are associated. But, in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1857.

his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs, and, in a letter to Government, openly gave expression to the opinion that, it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter, he drew the following dreary pic-

ture of the isolation of Assam:—"With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagnation, and torpidity, and a terrible sense of isolation, by which enterprise is chilled, and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles; nor, on the other hand, is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him."

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884, ^{The daily mail service.} a daily service of mail steamers was started between

Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur. Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached.

The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat, and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that, and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed, which, in comparison with that attained by the large cargo boats, was most commendable. During the rains Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri, while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation of the river is not entirely free from difficulty, the companies were not incited to further efforts by competition, and some years elapsed before any attempt was made to reduce the duration of the voyage. On the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway, the companies realized that it was necessary to accelerate their

timing if they were to retain their traffic, and steamers now reach Dibrugarh on the fourth day from Dhubri, while the voyage from Dibrugarh to Goalundo only occupies three days. This, however, is the rains timing and in the cold weather it is a voyage of five days from Dhubri to Dibrugarh and four days from Dibrugarh to Goalundo.

Prior to the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, the daily passenger steamers and the large cargo boats were practically the only means of communication between Nowgong and the outside world. Silghat which is 32 miles by road from Nowgong is the port of call and in the rains the passenger steamers are timed to reach Dibrugarh about 34 hours, and Dhubri, which is 19 hours by rail from Calcutta, about 26 hours after leaving Silghat.

The south of Nowgong is, however, now served by The railway. rail. The Gauhati branch of the Assam Bengal Railway enters the district a little to the west of Nakhola, and passes through the Gobha mauza and the Raha tahsil. At Chaparmukh it turns to the south-east and runs up the valley of the Kapili, and finally leaves the district $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Dimapur. The stations going from west to east are Jagi Road, Dharamtul, Chaparmukh, Kampur, Jamunamukh, Lanka, Lumding and Diphlu. At Lumding the Gauhati branch joins the main line which makes its way through the North Cachar Hills and down the Surma Valley to the sea at Chittagong, while eastward it connects with the Dibru-Sadiya Railway at Tinsukia.

In the Gobha mauza the line runs most of the way through land which lies too low for cultivation, and though in the Raha tahsil rice fields and villages once more appear, the Kapili valley is a great savannah which is very sparsely peopled. East of Jamunamukh there are hardly any signs of the handiwork of man, and a little to the west of Lumding the railway enters the huge forest which covers the valley between the Naga and the Mikir Hills and stretches far beyond the boundaries of Nowgong into Sibsagar.

Cultivation is, however, beginning to extend near Lumding, and to a less extent near Kampur, Jamunamukh, and Lanka, and with the facilities for communication now afforded, it is to be hoped that population will increase in the neighbourhood of the line. At Chaparmukh the railway taps the trade that has come down the Kapili from the hills, and tea is booked from Jagi Road, Dharamtul and Kampur, but as long as so much of the land through which it runs remains untilled and uninhabited, neither goods nor passenger traffic can be expected to be large. Kampur is the nearest station to Nowgong and is 67 miles from Guahati, 282 miles from Dibrugarh, and 412 miles from Chittagong.

**Roads: the
Trunk Road.**

The principal road in the district is the trunk road which runs along the whole of the south bank of the Brahmaputra from a point opposite Dhubri to Saikhoa near the eastern frontier of Lakhimpur. It enters Nowgong a little to the west of Nakhola where there is an inspection bungalow, and skirting the hills crosses the

Umiam or Kiling by a ferry at Amalighat. The first halting place after Nakhola is Dharamtul $14\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, where the Kapili is crossed by a ferry; from there, there is a march of $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the Raha inspection bungalow, but before reaching that place the Kalang must be crossed by a ferry in the rains or by a temporary bamboo bridge in the dry season. From Raha to Nowgong it is 14 miles, but before entering the station the Kalang has to be recrossed, either by a bridge or ferry. Beyond Nowgong there are inspection bungalows at Puranigudam on the 8th, Rangagora on the 16th, and Kuwarital on the 28th mile. Here the trunk road turns sharply to the east, but there is a branch road to Silghat, $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles distant, which crosses the Kalang by a ferry when that river ceases to be fordable. The road now runs between the Mikir Hills on the south, and a swamp which separates it from the Brahmaputra. At Amguri, 10 miles from Kuwarital, there is a second class inspection bungalow; and there is another halting place at Bagari 15 miles further on, and three miles west of the boundary of Nowgong. The trunk road thus runs right through the district from the south-west corner to the north-east, a total distance of about 100 miles.

The Jagi road leaves the trunk road at Nakhola, crosses the Kapili by a ferry at Jagi, and after passing Aujhari and Baropujia, where there are inspection bungalows, ultimately reaches Nowgong. It is only 37 miles in length, or nearly four miles less than the trunk road between Nowgong and Nakhola, and there are only two ferries to be crossed in place of four. The Lao-

Other roads.

khoa road runs north from Nowgong to the Brahmaputra, a distance of 21 miles, and from there a ferry conveys the traveller to Tezpur which is situated on the opposite bank. There are inspection bungalows at Rupahi, and on the high bank of the Brahmaputra at Laokhoa, 17 miles from Nowgong. The only other roads through the *chapari mahals* are those from Nowgong to Dhing 17 miles, and Nowgong to Juria 6½ miles, at both of which places there are inspection bungalows. During the winter fair weather tracks are made over the plain to enable the raiyats to bring their mustard seed to market, but more roads are wanted in this portion of the district especially in the western mauzas. The country at the foot of the Mikir Hills in Duar Bamuni is served by the Amlaki-Kathiatali road, which runs parallel to the trunk road from Kampur to a point beyond Salana up the Diyu valley. There are inspection bungalows at Kampur, (19 miles), Kathiatali (12 miles), and Chapanalla (12 miles) from Nowgong; and there are several branch roads which connect this road with the trunk road between Nowgong and Kaliabar. A branch also runs to Dabaka on the Jamuna river, where there is an inspection bungalow. There are altogether 342 miles of road in the district or one linear mile for every eleven square miles of area. This proportion is certainly not high but it has already been explained that there are huge tracts in Nowgong which are very sparsely peopled, and it is doubtful whether more roads are required except in the north-west corner of the district. Judged

by the standard of population there is a mile of road for every 760 people, which cannot be considered an illiberal allowance. All of these roads are raised above flood level, but, as they are unmetalled, sections, like the road between Nowgong and Silghat, which carry heavy traffic, become exceedingly muddy after rain. The smaller rivers and streams are crossed by bridges, which are generally made of timber, but there are no less than 48 places where ferries are still employed. In the early days of our administration goods when carried by land were either sent on elephants or were carried on men's shoulders, but bullock or buffalo carts are now freely used and there were nearly 1,100 of such carts in the district in 1904.

The Brahmaputra is the great high-way for steamer Waterways traffic, but country boats do not generally go far above Gauhati. Reference has been already made to the extent to which the Kalang and Kapili are used for inland traffic. The following statement shows the other rivers in the district which are recognised trade routes, and the distance to which a boat of four tons burthen can proceed up them in the rains. The principal articles of commerce brought down these rivers are mustard, cotton, lac, and other forest produce.

Name of river.	Highest point to which a boat of 4 tons burthen can proceed in the rains.	Name of river.	Highest point to which a boat of 4 tons burthen can proceed in the rains.
Barpani ...	Amtring hat.	Jamuna ...	Bokolia.
Deopani ...	Deopani ghat.	Kalanga ...	Kalanga.
Diphlu ...	Beyond district boundary.	Kiling or Umiam	Nearly to district boundary.
Doiang ...	Kyloo village.	Misa ...	Misa bridge.
Gatonga ...	Bagori.	Nanai ...	Chapanalla
Haria ...	... ..	Tetelisara ...	Jamuna river.

**Post and
Telegraph.**

The following statement shows that, though there has been a comparatively small increase in the number of post offices since 1875, there has been an enormous development of postal business.

Number of Post Offices in		Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank accounts in		Balance at the credit of the depositor in	
1875-76	1903-04	1861-62	1870-71	1903-04	1872	1903-04	1872	1903-04
6	11	12	41	128	5	1,131	Rs. 97	Rs. 2,42,800

There were only 11 offices in 1904, as compared with 6 in 1875, but the number of letters and postcards delivered was nearly twelve times the number handled in 1861-62. The savings bank has also made most satisfactory progress, and considering the low rate of interest given, and the scarcity of capital in the district the volume of deposits is considerable. The figures given for 1872 were, however, returned after the bank had only been open for three months. A list of the post offices in the district will be found in the Appendix—Statement B.

**Commerce
and trade.**

It is hardly necessary to say that in a sparsely populated district like Nowgong, where there are no towns of any size, and, apart from tea, no industries worth mentioning, commerce and trade are not of great importance.

In addition to tea the principal exports are mustard seed, which is raised in considerable quantities on the *chapolis*, cotton, lac, cocoons, and chillies which come

down from the hills, bamboo mats, thatching grass, wax, and other forest produce. The principal trade routes are the Brahmaputra, the Kalang, and the various water courses in the *chapari*, down which the mustard is boated when the river rises. The Kapili affords an outlet to the trade of the North Cachar Hills which comes to Chaparmukh, and is either transferred to the railway there, or continues by boat *viâ* the Kalang to the Brahmaputra. The chief imports are pulse and other food grains, cotton thread and cloth, umbrellas, sugar, salt, opium, *ghi*, kerosine, and other oils, and hardware. Nearly all the export and import trade is in the hands of the Marwari merchants, locally known as Kaiyas, who are the great shop-keepers and money lenders of the Assam Valley. They purchase their surplus products from the raiyats, and supply them in return with cloth, thread, salt, oil, and, very often opium. There are altogether some 40 shops in Nowgong town and nearly 250 more scattered about the district. The importance of the hill trade is indicated by the fact that, no less than thirty-three of these depots are situated in the Rangkhong mauza. .

In addition to the Kaiya, there are a few Muhammadans from Bengal who have opened shops in Nowgong town where they sell furniture, hardware, and general haberdashery. Some of the smaller village shops are owned by Assamese, but the natives of the district have little or no commercial instinct or capacity, and allow almost the whole of the profits of their trade to be monopolised by foreigners.

In statement C in the Appendix will be found a list of the principal local centres of trade.

**Markets and
fairs.**

Retail trade is largely transacted at markets which are held at different villages on certain days in the week. The articles offered for sale include rice and other grain, fruit and country vegetables, poultry, earthenware and metal vessels, oil, molasses, tobacco, and cotton cloth. These markets are attended by all the people in the neighbourhood and there is a considerable amount of business done.

Statement D in the Appendix contains a list of all the villages in which markets are held. Regular fairs are also held at certain seasons of the year, but are not as a rule very numerous attended, in spite of the fact that they are usually associated with some religious festival. The places at which fairs are held are shewn in Statement E in the Appendix. These gatherings take place in April or May, except in the Raha tahsil where they are held in May or June.

Municipality.

Nowgong town was constituted a municipality under Act V, B. C. of 1876 in 1894, but it is little more than a large village, and the total population found within municipal limits in 1901 was only 4,430. Revenue is raised by a tax on persons amounting to $\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. of income, a tax on Government buildings, and a tax on animals and carts, but all these items taken together only brought in Rs. 2,400 in 1902-03. An annual grant from Government of Rs. 5,000, and realizations from pounds and

markets form more important sources of income. The incidence of taxation per head of population in 1902-03, excluding the amount realized from Government buildings, was only 4 annas 2 pie, which was less than that imposed in any other municipality or union in the Province. The affairs of the town are managed by eleven commissioners of whom nine are natives and seven non-officials. There are fourteen public wells, but rigid Hindus who have no private well, drink the water of the Kalang river, in spite of the fact that it is exposed to every form of pollution, as they object to using wells from which water has been drawn by a man of lower caste. Fortunately this prejudice is gradually dying out. The public buildings and the bungalows of the European residents stand on a fine maidan dotted over with really magnificent trees, and the general effect is rather that of a park than of a town. The roads are kept in good order and adequate arrangements are made for the drainage, conservancy, and lighting of the place. A statement of municipal receipts and expenditure will be found in Table XVII.

In the early days of British Administration there was little money available for public works of any kind, and what there was, was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate. Local Board.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other

miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was, as before, entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day.

Functions.

The Local Board is entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within its jurisdiction, except a few main lines of communication, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. It is also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and is empowered to make

grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, it has placed at its disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries and some minor receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVI. The annual budgets of the Board are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs. 500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board surveyor.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Native system—Early settlements—The settlement of 1893-94—Expansion of land revenue—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Land tenures—Collection of land revenue—Tahsildari and mauzadari system—Area of unsettled waste—Excise—Opium—Country spirit—*Laopani*—Ganja—Income tax—Stamps—Public Works—Government—Administration of justice—Registration—Volunteering—Police—Jails—Education—Medical Aspects—Surveys.

**Land
Revenue.
Native
system.**

The system of revenue in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the State, and while so employed, was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour, each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas** of *rupit* land, and the land occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount, was assessed at annas 4 a *bigha*. In addition to this, the villagers paid a poll tax of one rupee for each adult *paik*.

Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809 states that each *pargana* was let for a term of year to a Chaudri,

* One acre = 3 025 *bighas*.

who made what profit he could out of land held in excess of the *paiks'* free grants. The Chaudris are said to have retained for their own use three-fifths of the gross collections, and to have treated the raiyats in a very oppressive manner. The nominal rent per plough of land in Kamrup was Rs. 2 but the exactions of the Chaudri raised it to Rs. 5 or Rs. 7. The yield of a plough was said to be 79 maunds of "rough rice" and 16 maunds of mustard seed, and as estimates of yield prior to the era of crop experiments were generally too high, the area of a plough was probably between four and five acres, and the rates exacted by the Chaudri must at that time have seemed oppressive. These remarks have been quoted, as, in all probability, the system prevailing in Nowgong was not dissimilar from that existing in Kamrup.

On the occupation of the country by the British, ^{Early settlements.} the system of compulsory labour was abolished and the *paik* land assessed to revenue. In 1835, the rates assessed in Nowgong and Kaliabar were four annas a *bigha* on *rupit*, and two annas a *bigha* on *baol* land and land exposed to flood.† *Basti* land was held free of revenue: but a poll tax of one rupee was levied on each adult. In the Mikir Mahal there was no poll tax, but land revenue was assessed at five annas and two and a half annas per *bigha*. In the *chapari*, Raha, Jamunamukh, and Morang no land revenue was assessed, but there was a tax of two or three rupees on each plough, and one rupee on each man cultivating with a spade. A poll tax of one rupee was also levied

† Letter No. 121 from Lieut. Brodie, dated 14-11-1835.

on Doms and Haris, and of five rupee on each Moria or working brass-smith.

The
settlement
of 1868.

Prior to 1868, the rates assessed did not exceed five and a half annas per *bigha*, but in that year the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, introduced a distinction between *basti* or garden and other land and raised the *bigha* rates to one rupee for *basti*, ten annas for *rupit*, and eight annas for other land. No detailed enquiries were made, there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the three different classes of land, there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class or even between district and district. The revised rates were, however, so moderate that it was never seriously contended that they would have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson was of opinion that the existing assessment was ridiculously low, and in support of his opinion pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about four lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days, represented a difference of about forty per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the enormous enhancement the revenue was collected without difficulty.

The
settlement
of 1893-94.

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold division of land was retained, but instead of imposing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were

Class	Basti.		Rupit.		Faringati.	
	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.
1st	1	6	1	0	0	12
2nd	1	4	0	14	0	10
3rd	1	2	0	12	0	9
4th	1	0	0	10	0	8

divided into four grades and, as will be seen from the statement in the margin, the rates imposed per *bigha* varied with the class of the village. The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by subtenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based was that the worst

lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities. A fresh settlement of the district, which will discriminate more closely between good and inferior land in the same class is now in progress.

Land in Nowgong town is assessed at a uniform rate of two rupees a *bigha* the place not being of sufficient size and importance to warrant as yet a special settlement of town lands. In the Mikir Hills the people pay a tax of two rupees a house, and no attempt is made to measure up the land that is actually cultivated by them.

Expansion
of land
revenue.

The following statement shows the gradual expansion of the land revenue and the settled area since the district first came under our administration. The figures for years in which a new settlement first came into operation, are printed in italics.

A D.		Rs.		Acres.
1884-85	...	60,475	...	Not available.
1882-83	...	1,53,024	...	176,589
1885-86	...	2,16,660	...	233,117*
1888-89	...	3,53,147	...	Not available
1892-93	...	5,41,144	...	344,522
1893-94	...	6,90,980	...	335,469
1902-03	...	4,67,478	...	265,889

The great decrease between 1893-94 and 1902-03 is primarily due to the destruction of one fourth of the total population by *kala azar*. As soon as the full extent of this appalling calamity had been revealed by the census of 1901, the Government of India directed that,

* Commissioner's letter dated 21-9-1867.

as a measure of relief, the land revenue demand of the district should be reduced by one lakh of rupees, and it is satisfactory to know that at last the tide has turned and that the settled area is once more increasing.

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy. Land is not readily resigned, and it occasionally possesses a certain market value, though in Nowgong this value has been materially affected by the fearful mortality that has prevailed of recent years. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice, *ahu*, and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. Most of this fluctuating cultivation is situated on the *chapari*, or tract of land lying between the Brahmaputra and the Kalang.

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops of the district are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic leases. The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorise the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognized. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either

form of lease or any individual field within the holding can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Deputy Commissioner.

The mandal. The basis of the land revenue system is the *mandal*, the village accountant and surveyor, who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per mensem. In March he proceeds to his circle, inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *Dagchitha*, in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *Jamabandi* or rent roll, which classifies the fields by holdings and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot weather he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops; he assists in the collection of the revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land. In most Provinces in India, a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can

be resigned, and there is not, as a rule, any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. The state of affairs in Nowgong is very different. In 1902-03, the total settled area was 265,889 acres, the area excluded from settlement was 26,651 acres, and the area of land newly included in settlement 34,685 acres. It must not, however, be supposed that this kaleidoscopic shifting of the fields is taking place in every portion of the district, and that everywhere may be seen the spectacle of cultivated land becoming jungle and jungle land changing into fields of waving rice. In the established portion land is seldom given up, but in the fluctuating area, as has been already explained, it is less trouble to burn the jungle and break up new land every second or third year, than to clean the fields of the weeds which spring up after they have been two or three times cropped.

Above the *mandal* comes the supervisor kanungo, a ^{Superior settlement staff.} peripatetic officer on pay ranging from Rs. 30, to Rs. 40, who checks his work both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy collectors and draw salaries ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 per mensem. The appointments are usually made by selection from candidates who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must either have taken a university degree or have read up to that standard

The different tenures in the district fall under two ^{Land tenures} main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and (2) those under

which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, but there are also considerable areas of revenue free land (*lakhiraj*) and land settled at half rates (*nisaf-khiraj*). In the time of the Ahom kings the whole of this land is said to have been held rent free, but in 1834 the Government of India ruled that "all rights to hold lands free of assessment founded on grants made by any former Government must be considered to have been cancelled by the British conquest. All claims, therefore, for restoration to such tenures can rest only on the indulgence of Government without any right." Mr. David Scott, the first British Commissioner of Assam, found that, even under the Ahom Rajas, these revenue free lands had been assessed at the rate of five annas a *pura*,* and he imposed this cess, which was subsequently raised to eight annas, upon them. The Government of India then directed that an enquiry should be instituted into these claims and that all cases in which land was held on *bóna-fide* grants dating from before the time of the Burmese conquest, or an account of services which were still performed, should be reported to them for orders. These instructions were not fully observed by the Commissioner at that time, Captain (subsequently General) Jenkins. This officer, for reasons which have never

* A *pura*=4 *bighas*, 3 025 *bighas*=1 acre.

been ascertained, drew a broad distinction between *debottar* or temple lands and *brahmottar* and *dharmottar* lands, *i.e.*, lands which were devoted to some religious purpose but were not actually the property of a temple. The former he released from all claims for revenue; on the latter he imposed the rate assessed by Mr. Scott, which happened to be half the full rates prevailing at the time. No report was even submitted to the Government of India and no final orders were ever received from them, but the right of the former class of proprietors to hold free of revenue, and of the latter at half the usual rates, has been definitely recognised. Waste land included within the boundaries of *nisf-khiraj* estates is assessed at 1 anna 3 pies per *bigha*, and as the proportion of uncultivated land in these estates is fairly high, this assessment adds considerably to the gross demand. The total area of *lakhiraj* land in the district in 1903-04 was 2,314 acres and of *nisf-khiraj* land 5,382 acres. The area settled year by year at full rates is shewn in Table XIV.

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1861. The underlying principle in each case was that the land should be held on long leases at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions. Between 1861 and 1876 the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs. 2-8-0 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854

Grant of
land for the
cultivation
of special
crops.

were allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there is no longer in the district any land held under the rules of 1838 and only 469 acres under the rules of 1854, while there are 21,349 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for, though it is nominally put up to auction, there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For two years the grant remains revenue free, and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules will be found in Table XIV.

Collection
of land
revenue :
the small
mausa.

The collection of land revenue was first introduced in Nowgong in 1833-34. Engagements were entered into with the raiyats direct, but the duty of collection was entrusted to a bissoah who received a commission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., though he was not held responsible for the payment of the total revenue demand, irrespective of the amount that he actually succeeded in collecting. In 1840, a village accountant or kakati was appointed, who received a commission of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and this, in addition to the grants of land given to the peons, raised the total cost of collection to $16\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., of the revenue realized. In 1839-40, the experiment was tried of making a

settlement with the mauzadar for a term of years, and holding him responsible for any losses that might occur, but allowing him to absorb any profits that accrued from the extension of cultivation. In practice this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and was abandoned, and recourse was again had to the annual settlement under which the fiscal officer was only responsible for the collection of the revenue. Efforts were made to induce respectable mauzadars to take five years leases of the *chapari mahals*, on a commission of no less than 20 per cent. Twenty *chapari* mauzas were settled in this manner, but in every case but one, the mauzadars threw up their leases, and accepted annual settlements on the old rate of commission. The fiscal units at that time were very small and in 1853 there were no less than 158 mauzadars, exclusive of those appointed for the Mikir Hills.*

The general tendency, since that date, has been to increase the size of the unit of collection. In 1867, the mauzadars, as the collecting officers were called, received 15 per cent. of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later, their commission was reduced to 10 per cent. and in 1872 the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent. could only be drawn on the first Rs. 6,000 of revenue, .5 per cent. being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, the idea gained ground that Government would do better by putting

Larger
mauzas and
tahsils.

* *Vide* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills—Calcutta 1854.

the mauzadar aside and employing salaried officials as a collecting agency. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him. Three tahsils were opened in 1892, at Nowgong, Raha, and Samaguri, an arrangement which left the mauzadars still responsible for 60 per cent. of the land revenue demand. It was subsequently found, that there was some difficulty in dealing direct with so large a body of raiyats, and in 1904, the tahsils were again broken up into mauzas.

**Compulsory
realisation
of revenue.**

The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments ; three-fifths on January 15th, and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the government demand from the sale of mustard and pulse when it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement, is also due in one instalment on that date.

In 1903-04, notice of demand was issued on account of 10 per cent. of the total land revenue demand, but it was only necessary to attach property on account of 2 per cent. The number of cases in which it was necessary to have recourse to sale was very small, and the revenue on account of which property was sold only represented 0·05 per cent. of the total demand.

The figures below show the total area of the district as reported by the Assistant Surveyor General, Calcutta, the settled area, and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03 and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year.

Area of
unsettled
waste.

	Square miles		
Total area of district	...	...	3,843
„ settled area	...	...	415
Area of reserved forests	...	...	142
Area of unsettled waste	...	..	3,286

No less than 85 per cent. of the total area falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this land is fit for cultivation or human habitation. The figures include the area of roads and of tracts that are permanently under water, which amounts to a very considerable total. It also includes the area of the Mikir Hills, which could never support a dense population, of extensive tracts which are submerged during the rainy season and are hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It is useless to attempt to form any estimate of the proportion of the unsettled area in which cultivation could be carried on with profit, and it is hardly necessary to do so, as it is obvious that the district could support a much larger population than it now possesses.

The most densely populated portion of the district is the tract of country lying on either side of the Kalang, between Silghat and Raha, but there is not a single mauza in which the area of unsettled land is not extremely large. Nearly one-third of the *sadr* tahsil

was, for instance, unsettled in 1902-03, but this, for Nowgong, is but a small proportion. The following statement shows the unsettled area of the *chapari* mauzas, and there is also an enormous area of waste land in the Kapili valley.

Mauza.		Total area in acres.	Unsettled area in acres.
Juria	...	80,000	76,000
Dhing	...	70,000	39,000
Mikirbheta	...	42,000	31,000
Gerua Bokani	...	98,000	87,000
Ghugua	...	40,000	35,000
Mayang	...	76,000	70,000

Excise :
Opium.

From Table XII it will be seen that excise furnishes nearly three-eighths of the total revenue of Nowgong, and that five-sixths of the excise receipts are derived from the sale of opium. Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy, but the evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable, and, in that year, poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This change was bitterly resented by the people, and cost the life of the Assistant Commissioner, Lieutenant Singer, but the story of the Phulaguri riots has already been told in the chapter on the history of the district. The price was quickly raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the figure at which it

* Opium is said to have been introduced by some of Captain Welsh's Soldiers and to have been first used as a specific against bowel complaints. The poppy was first cultivated in Beltala near Gauhati and the drug, which was at first regarded as a medicine, soon enslaved the Assamese.

now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government, licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year, it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883, the right to sell opium in a particular *mahal* was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to enormously reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74 there were in the district 867 shops for the retail vend of opium, whereas in 1903-04 there were only 134.

The following figures show the extent to which the consumption of the drug has been affected by the raising of the rate of duty. 1873-74, 284 maunds; 1879-80, 179 maunds; 1889-90, 243 maunds; 1899-1900, 168 maunds; and 1902-1903, 191 maunds. The population, in the first and the last years of the series, was about the same, though the number of aboriginal tribesmen, who are the chief consumers, was probably smaller in the latter year, but the quantity of opium issued was only two-thirds of the amount sold in 1874. Prior to 1860, when there were no restrictions upon the cultivation of the poppy, the opium habit had taken a firm hold upon the people, and even though it was taxed, habitual eaters were unable to forswear the drug. But the steady rise in price and the diminution in the number of shops, naturally tended to restrict

consumption and to deter the younger generation from taking to the habit. During the first half of the century, opium probably cost the people about Rs. 5 a seer.* Since 1890, the price has varied from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a seer, and it is only natural, that such a heavy increase in the cost should be attended with a decrease in the amount consumed.

The drug is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk, and is seldom smoked as this is considered to have an injurious effect upon the constitution of the smoker. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills.

Country
spirit.

The outstill system is still in force in the district, that is to say the right to manufacture and sell spirit at a particular locality is put up to auction, and no attempt is made to levy duty on the actual quantity of spirit distilled. The abstract in the margin shows that of recent years there has been a considerable increase in the revenue derived from country spirits. But the system of auctioning the shops depends for its success upon the existence of competition at the sales, and the lowness of the fees received in 1880 and 1890

	No. of shops.	Revenue.
		Ks.
1873-74 ...	4	2,944
1879-80 ..	9	4,063
1889-90 ...	15	5,782
1899-1900	19	25,292

* Vide Statement XIV appended to a report submitted by the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, on February 15th, 1836.

suggests that at that time purchasers were able to obtain licenses at practically their own prices. The large increase in the foreign population, most of whom are liquor drinkers, which more than trebled itself between 1881 and 1901, has been the principal cause of the expansion of the trade, as, though the aboriginal tribes are great consumers of liquor, they prefer a strong beer which they brew from rice to ordinary country spirit.

The attention of the Administration has been more than once directed to the discovery of the most effective means of discouraging a taste for drinking, but the most serious obstacle to improvement lies in the fact that, if the supply of licensed liquor is cut off, rice-beer and spirit can be readily manufactured by the people, and complaints have more than once been received of excessive drunkenness on tea gardens which were situated far beyond the reach of any licensed liquor shop. The outstill system is not theoretically the most desirable, but, owing to the difficulty of communications and the facilities that exist for the manufacture of illicit liquor, it has not yet been found possible to introduce any more satisfactory methods in its place. The following measures have recently been introduced with the object of reducing, as far as possible, the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

The most important shops are situated at Lumding Jakhlabandha, Nowgong, and Barjuri.

Country
spirit. The
still.

Country spirit is manufactured by native methods and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort, which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers, where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

Material
employed.

The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally mixed : mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers ; or mohwa 25 seers,

molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers; or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar* a substance composed of leaves, roots, and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three-quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa, the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul* if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation as if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower strength is not considered palatable, and it

seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kinds of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities.

Laopani.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attained to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed: The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to some 8 or 10 quarts of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the

two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Nowgong but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. Ganja is not much used except by foreigners, and from Table XII it will be seen that the revenue raised from this drug is comparatively small. It is imported from Rajshahi in bond by a wholesale dealer, who pays a duty of Rs. 11 per seer when issuing it for sale to the retail vendors. The right of retail sale is put up to auction and in 1904 Rs. 6,898 were paid for the 14 shops that are sanctioned for Nowgong.

The receipts, on account of income tax, are very small and in 1903-04 only amounted to Rs. 6,876. Nearly one-half of this is derived from the salaries paid by companies and private employers, in other words the salaries drawn by managers of gardens and their staff, and about one-third is obtained from 'other sources of income.'

The total number of assesseees under the latter head was only 55. More than half were reported to have

incomes ranging from Rs. 1,000 to Rs. 1,250 per annum, and there were only three assesses with incomes of more than Rs 5,000 per annum. The bulk of the persons assessed on 'other sources of income' were general shop keepers, and the balance was composed of 10 mauzadars, 9 buffalo keepers, 4 contractors, 3 pleaders, a doctor and a teacher.

Stamps.

The receipts under the head both of judicial and non-judicial stamps, are considerably lower than those obtained from any other district in the plains. In 1903-04, they only amounted to Rs. 17,568 under the former head, as compared with Rs. 25,577 in Darrang, the next lowest district in the two Valleys, and Rs. 4,04,169 in Sylhet. The corresponding figures for non-judicial stamps were Rs. 3,923, Rs. 6,396 and Rs. 1,51,623. It is, however, only natural that with regard to this particular item of revenue, Nowgong should stand at the bottom of the list. It has a smaller population than any district in the plains, there is little crime, and very little trade or business to require the intervention of our courts.

Public Works.

Public works are in charge of the Assistant or Executive Engineer, who is stationed at Tezpur, and who has, under his orders, a subdivisional officer with two upper and four lower subordinates in Nowgong.

The department is entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, the circuit house, dak-bungalow, schools, and post and telegraph offices at Nowgong, and inspection bungalows,

on Provincial roads. Rest houses on other roads are maintained by the Local Board. The most important roads which are directly under the department are:—the section of the south trunk road which runs through the district from Nakhola *via* Jagi, Nowgong and Kuwarital to the frontier of Sibsagar, and the road from Amlaki to Kathiatali. It has already been explained that Local Board works, that require professional skill or engineering knowledge, are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the department has to contend are the absence of an artisan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour, and it is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Nowgong is largely due.

Nowgong is not divided into any sub-divisions, and the district is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner who is allowed two subordinate magistrates as his immediate assistants. Government

The total number of clerks employed in the Deputy Commissioner's office in 1903 was 43, who drew altogether from Government Rs. 20,760 in salaries. Separate officers are in charge of the Police, Forests, Public Works, and Medical Department.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were four stipendiary and two honorary Criminal
and Civil
Justice.

magistrates in the district and the former decided 1,072 and the latter 210 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 3,148 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 965 cases under the Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or against the human body. There is little serious crime in Nowgong and most of these offences were either petty assaults or thefts of small sums. Civil work is not heavy, and the Deputy Commissioner acts as sub-judge while one of the assistant magistrates discharges the functions of a munsif. In 1902, the sub-judge heard 5 original cases and 45 appeals, while 1,262 original suits were disposed of by the munsif. Almost all of these cases were simple money suits and nearly three-fourths were disposed of without contest. Special rules are in force for the administration of criminal justice in the Mikir Hills. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred and the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentences of death, transportation, and imprisonment exceeding seven years subject to the confirmation of the Local Government. Fine and imprisonment may be awarded in lieu of any other punishment, provided that the amount of punishment awardable for such offence under the Penal Code be not exceeded, and no appeal lies of right from any sentence by the Deputy Commissioner of less than three years imprisonment.

Registration.

The Deputy Commissioner is also the Registrar of the district, and one of the assistant magistrates acts as sub-

registrar. The number of documents registered is, however, very small, and in 1903 only amounted to 219, a fact which shows in a very striking manner how extremely simple is the economic organization of Nowgong.

Nowgong like most of the districts in Assam has no regular garrison, but a certain number of the Euro-^{Volunteer-}pean residents have been enrolled as volunteers. A corps of mounted infantry was first raised in Nowgong in 1888, with a strength of 30 members, and three years later, the volunteers in the four upper districts of the Valley, were formed into one corps known as the Assam Valley Mounted Rifles, which in 1896, was converted into a regiment of Light Horse. The strength of the corps in 1903, was 312, 21 of whom were residing in Nowgong.

The civil police are in charge of a District or Assis-^{Police.}tant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of one inspector, 15 sub-inspectors, and 177 constables. Ninety-one smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Nowgong and a reserve of men is kept up at the district headquarters, who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. There is very little organized crime, and the actual police duties are comparatively light. Table XIX in the Appendix shows the places at which there are investigating centres and the strength maintained at each.

Jails.

The only jail in the district is situated at Nowgong, and has accommodation for 49 male convicts and 14 under-trial prisoners. The jail premises, which cover an area of almost three acres, were originally surrounded by a wall of masonry. Parts of this wall were thrown down by the earthquake of 1897, and the gaps have since been filled up with a bamboo palisade. Most of the wards are built of timber and bamboo with roofs of thatch. Female prisoners are transferred to Tezpur and male convicts sentenced to more than three months' imprisonment to Gauhati. The prisoners are principally employed on gardening and oil pressing.

Education.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the condition of education in Bengal was bad enough, but in Assam it was even worse. In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College described the state of education in the Valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial schools had only recently been introduced in Assam. In 1847-48, there were no secondary and only 10 primary schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress as on the occasion of Mr. Mill's visit in 1853, there were only 13 schools of all grades.

In the following year, Major Butler reported that there were 14 vernacular schools, with 836 pupils on the rolls, but he drew a gloomy picture of the state of education in the district. "The proficiency attained

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

by the boys at these institutions is very low indeed, few stay longer than is sufficient to enable them to read and write a common petition and acquire a little arithmetic, with a slight knowledge of the surveying in use in Assam. When their education is, in their own opinion, complete, they are qualified to become village Kaguttees or writers. One of the greatest impediments to the advancement of education in Assam, is the indifference with which it is received by the respectable classes. They show no wish whatever to see the rising generation educated or made wiser than themselves: in fact, I am half inclined to think, that, if the higher classes could prevent the youth of Assam from being instructed, they would not hesitate to do so."†

1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXI.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total no of pupils.	No. of persons in district to each pupil.	PERCENTAGE UNDER INSTRUCTION TO THOSE OF SCHOOL GOING AGE.	
							Males.	Females
1874-75	9	487	81	2,316	2,803	92	...	...
1880-81	7	582	100	2,282	3,864	82	11.42	0.42
1890-91	5	539	175	5,158	5,677	61	20.62	
1900-01	5	430	112	4,063	4,493	58	21.79	0.76

The column showing the total number of pupils suggests that education is not spreading but receding, but

† Travels and adventures in the Province of Assam, by Major John Butler, p 239, London, Smith Elder and Coy, 1855.

this of course is not the case. Each of the years selected shows an increase in the proportion of the people under instruction, and though there was but little spread of education during the last decade, to those acquainted with the calamities from which the district has been suffering this can hardly be a matter for surprise.

**Secondary
education.**

The schools of the district are divided into five grades, high, middle English, middle vernacular, upper primary, and lower primary. There is only one high school in the district which is situated at Nowgong.

The boys at this school are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The smaller boys no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—

(1) Assamese, comprising literature, grammar and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), Mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, and (6) simple lessons in botany and agriculture. There are only five middle

schools in Nowgong, which are situated at Nowgong town, Raha, Demow-Salmara, Puranigudam, and Silghat.

Primary education is again divided into upper and lower, but in 1903-04 there was only one upper primary school in the district. The course of study in lower primary schools includes Reading, Writing, Dictation, Simple Arithmetic, and the Geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. For educational purposes, the district is in charge of a Deputy Inspector of schools who is assisted by two sub-inspectors.

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Nowgong. It contains ten dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important duties of the Civil Surgeon. He also controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

The conditions under which the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long mean duration

of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates, instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from diseases induced by chills, which might have been avoided by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Vital
statistics.

Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headman to the mandal of the circle, this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals, as the *gaobura*

was an unpaid servant of Government and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each *gaobura* $2\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901, the mean recorded birth rate was 24 per mille, the death rate 45 per mille and it is certain that both of these figures were much below the truth. The statistics of age recorded at the census are, however, so unreliable, and the disturbing effect of immigrants is so great that it is not possible to fix a normal birth and death rate for the district. It is, however, fairly clear that the exceptional unhealthiness of the last decade not only killed off the people, but had a prejudicial effect on the fertility of the survivors. The number of children under 10 to every thousand of the population decreased from 329 in 1891 to 313 in 1901, and similar decreases were to be seen in Sylhet and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills where public health was also bad.

Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows

		Cholera death rate per mille.
1879	...	11.9
1884	...	9.0
1886	...	10.1
1890	...	9.9
1893	...	9.7
1900	...	25.0
1908	...	6.7

the recorded death rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. For the purposes of comparison it may be added that the death rate in England from all causes in 1901 was only 16.9

per mille. In 1900, the recorded death rate in Nowgong from cholera alone was nearly 50 per cent. higher than the total death rate for England in the following year.

The distribution of cholera varies considerably from year to year, and is by no means confined to the villages that line the banks of the sluggish Kalang. In 1900, there was a terrible outbreak on the *chapari* from Dhing to Nij Tetelia, Ghugua and Dandua being the places most affected. The recorded death rate per mille from cholera in these mauzas in that year was as follows: Dhing, 58; Mikirbheta, 73; Ghugua and Dandua, 124; Charaibahi, 109; and Tetelia 63. It will be seen that the cholera death rate in these mauzas was much higher than the cholera death rate in the three tahsils at each of the four great epidemics,* though the Kalang flows through all the three. Mauzas that seem generally to be predisposed to cholera are Kachamari, which lies along the Kalang opposite Nowgong, and Jamunamukh and Kampur in the valley of the Kapili. It does not appear, however, that the Kapili can have much to do with the dissemination

Death rate per mille from Cholera in—

	1890	1893	1900	1903
Samaguri ...	9	10	12	11
Nowgong ...	10	10	13	20
Raha ...	5	17	23	4

* For the first two epidemics the rate is calculated on the population for 1891 for the last two on the population of 1901.

of the disease as Garubat and Kathiatali, which are in close proximity, have been fairly free. The mauzas on the *chapani* that suffered so terribly in 1900 were not very seriously affected by the other epidemics.

Other diseases which are prevalent in the district ^{Other diseases} are worms, diseases of the skin such as itch and ring worm, ulcers, dysentery and diarrhoea, and rheumatic affections. Worms are extremely common and are said to be absorbed into the system through the coarser kinds of plantains. Elephantiasis is rare and only the simpler form of goitre is met with, but that is common, especially in the Mikir Hills. Venereal diseases are practically unknown amongst the indigenous population, though Bengali coolies and other foreigners are not unfrequently affected. Small-pox is endemic and occasionally breaks out in a most virulent form. The highest recorded death rate of recent years was 8·3 per mille in 1898. The people do not seem to be fully alive to the advantages of vaccination and only 32 per mille of the population was protected on the average in each of the five years ending with 1902-03.

The most deadly lethal agent in the district has, ^{Kala Azar.} however, been the mysterious form of fever known as *kala-azar*. The following account of this disease is extracted from the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901.

“When first referred to in the Sanitary Reports of the province, it is described as an intense form of malarial poisoning, which was popularly supposed to be contagious. The Civil Surgeon of Goalpara, however, rejected the theory of contagion, and in 1884 expressed the opinion that *kala-azar* was simply a local name for malarial fever and its consequences. In 1889-90 a

specialist (Surgeon-Captain Giles) was appointed to investigate both *kala-azar* and the so-called *beri-beri* of coolies, and he rapidly came to the conclusion that *kala-azar* and *beri-beri* were merely different names for *anchylostomiasis*, and that the mortality was due to the ravages of the *dochmius duodenalis*, a worm which lives in the small intestine. This theory corresponded with the observed facts to the extent that it admitted, what at that stage of the enquiry could hardly be denied, that *kala-azar* was communicable, the uncleanly habits of the natives of the province affording every facility for the transfer of the ova of the parasite from the sick to the healthy; but the support which was given to Dr. Giles' views by local medical opinion was withdrawn when Major Dobson proved by a series of experiments that *anchylostoma* were present in varying numbers in no less than 620 out of 797 healthy persons examined by him. In 1896, Captain Rogers was placed on special duty to make further investigations, and, in addition to demonstrating various differences of a more or less technical character in the symptomatology of the two diseases, he pointed out that, whereas *kala-azar* was extremely inimical to life, the number of cases of *anchylostomiasis* that terminated fatally was by no means large. The conclusion to which this specialist came, after a very careful enquiry, was that the original view was correct, and that *kala-azar* was nothing but a very intense form of malarial fever, which could be communicated from the sick to the healthy, an opinion which was to a great extent endorsed by the profession in Assam, successive Principal Medical Officers declaring that, whatever *kala-azar* was, it had been abundantly proved that it was not *anchylostomiasis*. The suggestion that malaria could be communicated did not, however, commend itself to the entire medical world, and was criticised with some severity, Dr. Giles writing as recently as 1898—"Dr. Rogers, like a medical Alexander, cuts his Gordian knot by announcing that Assamese malaria is infectious. In this he places himself at variance with not only the scientific but the popular opinion of the entire world." A complete change in popular and scientific opinion was, however, brought about by the development of Manson's mosquito theory, and Major Ross, who visited Assam, in the course of his enquiry into the manner in which infection by malaria takes place, confirmed Dr. Rogers' conclusions, and in 1899 placed on record his opinion that, as stated by Dr. Rogers, *kala-azar* was malarial fever. The principal points of difference between *kala-azar* and ordinary malarial fever lie in the rapidity with which

the former produces a condition of severe cachexia, and the ease with which it can be communicated from the sick to the healthy. The origin of the disease is obviously a matter which must always be open to doubt. Captain Rogers is of opinion that *kala-azar* was imported from Rangpur, where malarial fever was extraordinarily virulent in the early seventies, but this is still a matter of conjecture."

"The first recorded case occurred at Nowgong in 1888, where it was brought from Gauhati by some boys who attended the school there, and in 1889 another centre of infection was started at Raha by a man who came home to die, after contracting the disease in Kamrup. Two years afterwards the infection was conveyed in the same way to Nakhola, and from these three centres the disease gradually spread over the whole district. The inaccuracy of the returns of vital occurrences collected by the unpaid *gaonburas* of the Assam Valley is well known, but it is possible to draw some conclusions from them, provided that the amount of error remains constant, and the recorded birth-rate for Nowgong is such as to justify us in assuming that there has not been any very marked improvement in registration during the last fourteen years. During the five years 1887-91, before *kala-azar* had got a grip on the district, the average number of deaths annually from fever was 4,405. Had this rate been maintained for the nine years ending December 31st, 1900, the total mortality from fever would have amounted to 39,645, but our records, imperfect though they are, show 98,824 deaths as due to fever and *kala-azar*, and we are thus left with a recorded mortality from *kala-azar* of 54,179 out of a population which in 1891 only numbered 347,307 souls. The following account was given by the Deputy Commissioner of the effects of the disease upon the district:—

The state of the district can hardly be realised by any one who has not travelled throughout it, and been into the villages. Deserted *basti* sites are common; a few of the people in such cases removed elsewhere, but most stuck to their houses till they died. In Lalung and Hojai villages, I believe hardly anyone went elsewhere, and these two tribes lost very heavily. There used to be numbers of Hojais in the neighbourhood of Kharikhana; almost all have died; ten or twelve Hojai villages at the foot of the hills near Dabaka have completely disappeared, and Dabaka itself has shrunk from an important trade centre to a miserable hamlet. *kala-azar* is not only merciless in the number of its victims, but also in the way it kills. Men rarely

died under three months, and often lingered two years, sometimes even more. If two or three members of a family were attacked with the disease, all its little savings were spent to support them. *kala-azar* not only claimed victims in a family but left the survivors impoverished, if not ruined. A case which came under my personal notice will show what I mean: I noticed some fine rice land at Ghilani, near Kampur, lying uncultivated, and sent for the *pattadar* to question him about it. He came and said.—“We were three, my father, my elder brother, and myself. They died of *kala-azar*, and we sold our cattle and all we had to support them. Now I am ill, and shall die next year, how can I cultivate the land?” In many instances, an old man or woman, or two or three small children, are all that is left of a large family. In Nowgong, Raha, and Puranigudam are empty spaces where formerly houses stood, and the same sort of thing can be seen all over the district. So much land had gone out of cultivation that it has hardly any value except in the town, near Silghat, and in the Kandali mauza. A man will not buy land when it can be had for the asking.

Since this report was written a new theory has been mooted and it has been suggested that *kala-azar* may after all not be a malarial fever, but may be caused by those curious parasites which have recently been discovered in the spleens of fever stricken patients, and which are known as Leishman-Donovan bodies. Fortunately the disease is now fast dying out in Nowgong, and its origin and treatment are no longer the burning question that they were, but it will be many years before the district will have fully recovered from its ravages.

Native
methods
of mid-
wifery.

The native methods of midwifery unfortunately leave much to be desired. There are very few professional midwives amongst the Assamese and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help

and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. An *ojha* or village medicine man is summoned and the first thing that he does is to have a plant called *son borial* pulled up by the roots, as an inspection of these roots enables him to pronounce an opinion on the prospects of the case. The patient is then required to eat a pan leaf, a betel nut, and a small worm found in the plantain tree. While she is doing this, the appropriate *mantras* are recited, a goat or a duck is sacrificed, and as a further precaution *mantras* are written out and tied round her neck and arm, or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother, in such cases, generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance. If the labour is a natural one, all is well, but if complications arise, the case has usually a fatal termination, and it is probable that many lives are lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases.

The natives are not altogether illogical in their therapeutic system, and believing, as they do, that many diseases are caused by the malignant action of some evil

Native
medical
methods.

spirit, they, not unreasonably, try to cure them by incantations, charms, and *mantras*. They have, however, simple prescriptions for some of the commoner ailments which are summarised below :—

(a) For fevers essence of ginger (*zingiber officianale*) prepared from the dried rhizome by maceration and percolation with a decoction of tulsi leaves (*Ocimum Bacilicum*) flavoured with honey as an excipient.

(b) For diarrhoea. Coriander seed (*Coriandrum Sativum*) and dry ginger, one chattak of each, and half a seer of water. This is boiled down to two chattaks. Dose, one chattak twice daily for two or three days, until improvement is maintained.

(c) For dysentery a decoction of turmeric (*Curcuma Longa*) made with lime water. One chattak to be taken twice or thrice daily.

(d) For dyspepsia. A combination of camphor, cloves, catechu, aniseed and rock salt, approximately one grain of each made up into a bolus and taken once daily usually in the morning.

(e) For diseases of the urinary organs linseed tea is given as a demulcent drink, as it is supposed to be efficacious in dissolving vesical calculi.

(f) For inflammatory diseases of the ear gum asafaetida (*Ferula alliacea*), coriander seed and dry ginger are prescribed. Equal parts of each of these are boiled together in a little oil and dropped into the ear when warm.

(g) For bronchitis. Essence of ginger one part, honey three parts, to be taken three or four times daily till relief is obtained.

(h) For diseases of the eye. Catarrhal and purulent ophthalmia are treated internally with a decoction of the bark of titasapa (*Michelia champaca*) flavoured with honey as an adjunct. Externally the eyes are bathed frequently in a decoction of *Tamarindus Indica*.

(i) For splenic enlargement. Internally fresh juice of papaya (*carica papaya*) on a few grains of sugar to be taken two or three times daily. Externally strips of cloth soaked in hot cow's urine are applied frequently over the region of the spleen.

(j) For cutaneous diseases, itch, ringworm, &c. Powdered sulphur made into an ointment with butter as it's basis is applied externally.

(k). For worms. The fresh juice of pine-apple leaves is regarded as an efficacious anthelmintic.

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. The first dispensary was opened in Nowgong town in 1863, but of recent years the number has very largely been increased. From the statement below it appears that for every patient treated in 1881,

Increase in
facilities for
obtaining
medical aid.

there were 55 in 1901, while the number of operations performed rose from 16 to 1,159.

			Dispensaries		Patients treated.
			No.		No.
1881	...	...	1	..	1,857
1891	...	...	4	...	34,939
1901	...	...	13	...	101,268

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Nowgong, Puranigudam, Silghat, and Dhing, each of which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of 40 or more. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, dysentery and diarrhoea, dyspepsia, and rheumatic affections.

Survey.

A professional revenue survey of the district was made at the time when Assam was still a division of Bengal and the maps were published in 1875. They are on the scale of one mile to the inch and shew the sites of villages and the physical features of the country. A smaller map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1882 and brought up to date in 1893. An area of 1,003 square miles which included the more densely populated portions of the district was cadastrally surveyed in the season of 1887 and 1890-91. The maps are on the scale of 16 inches to the mile and in addition to topographical features show the boundaries of each field. Certain areas which were omitted by the professional party were subsequently surveyed by local agency on the basis of a theodolite traverse, and the results obtained from the cadastral survey both by professional and local agency have been utilized in the revision of the one inch maps.*

* The area so surveyed up to September 30th 1900 was 105 square miles.

APPENDIX.

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STATEMENT A.

STATEMENT.—A.

LIST OF TEA GARDENS.

NAME OF GARDEN.	Name of owner or Company to which it belongs.	Mans in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from town.	Area in 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) in 1904.	Labour force in 1904.	REMARKS.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Amguri	Mr. White	Duar Bagari	30	Acres. 1,190	Acres. 84	90	
2. Amaki	Amaki Tea Co.	Rhetenguri	33	3,678	560	966	
3. Anjistrani	Salana Tea Co.	Duar Salana	33	1,106	327	483	
4. Anguri	Killing Valley Tea Association	Gobha	30	342	Included in Killing.	133	
5. Balljuri	Messrs. J. E. Barlow and F. Barlow	Chalchali	15	1,308	18	119	
6. Balikuchi	Messrs. J. E. Barlow, F. Barlow and W. Macdonald	Sahari	34	353	202	155	
7. Ramuni	Salana Tea Co.	Chalchali	13	183	50	Worked from Topodjuri.	
8. Barhampur	Munshi Rahmat Ali	Sinjapattani	10	271	20	Worked by village labour.	
9. Barghat	Salana Tea Co.	Duar Salana	24	2,138	560	613	
10. Barghat Valley	Mr. J. A. Middleton	Garubhat	30	814	394	678	
11. Baranjar	Munshi Rahmat Ali	Chalchali	13	368	45	20	
12. Chapansalla (European)	Chabua Tea Co.	Do.	18	731	133	173	
13. Do. (Native)	Munshi Mahammad	Do.	19	463	233	145	
14. Diju Valley	Messrs. Beeg Dumbop & Co. and J. Thomas & Co.	Duar Salana	30	3,345	603	748	
15. Gobha	Killing Valley Tea Association	Gobha	45	343	Included in Killing.	Worked from Killing.	
16. Gorali	Messrs. King Hamilton & Co.	Chalchali	16	80	Included in Jisajuri.	Worked from New Salana.	
17. Hatibandha	Salana Tea Co.	Duar Salana	20	1,363	235	Worked from New Salana.	
18. Hatirgaon	Chabua Tea Co.	Barbhagia	26	1,557	Included in Kellyden.	Worked from Kellyden.	
19. Hyah	Salana Tea Co.	Kathistali	14	854	146	Worked from Kandal.	
20. Jisajuri	Messrs. King Hamilton & Co.	Chapanalla	18	1,316	615(c)	633 (d)	

(c) Includes figures for Gofali.

STATEMENT A.
LIST OF TEA GARDENS.—Contd.

NAME OF GARDEN.	Name of owner or Company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from Now Bonga town.	Area in 1904.	Area under tea (both mature and immature) in 1904.	Labour force in 1904.	REMARKS.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
21. Kaliabar	Kaliabar and Sikani Tea Co., Ltd.	Pubtharia	Miles.	Acres.	Acres.	396	
22. Kandali	Salana Tea Co.	Kandali	32	714	320 (b)	531	
23. Kalyiden	Chabua Tea Co.	Barbhagia	13	2,343	480	1,690	
24. Kiling	Kiling Valley Tea Association	Uttarkhola	25	2,092	867 (c)	380	
25. Kulukuchi	Messrs. J. E. Barlow, F. Barlow	..	30	174	560 (d)	..	
26. Kutbari	B. Howes and W. Macdonald	Sahari	32	833	193	132	
27. Kutree	Rabu M. L. Halder	Duar Bagari	53	1,030	280	352	
28. Langsang	Kiling Valley Tea Association	Gobha	30	330	Included in Kiling.	Worked from Kiling.	
29. Lengteng	Messrs. J. E. Barlow and F. Barlow	Duar Salana	19	800	311	497	
30. Misa	Salana Tea Co.	Ditto	28	1,646	417	1,673	
31. Naopani	Chabua Tea Co.	Barbhagia	23	1,769	819	579	
32. Neli	Salana Tea Co.	Duar Salana	26	1,263	398	Worked from Langsang	
33. New Palkai	Kiling Valley Tea Association	Uttarkhola	30	856	Included in Kiling.	92	
34. New Salana	Babu M. L. Halder	Duar Bagari	43	791	50	Worked from Palkai.	
35. Noroi	Salana Tea Co.	Duar Salana	24	1,717	365	1,006	
36. Old Salana	Chabua Tea Co.	Bhelenguri	18	1,512	284	258	
37. Palkai	Ditto	Ditto	21	923	459	619	
38. Rangazara	Rabu M. L. Halder	Duar Bagari	40	320	137	178	
39. Rangulu	Amaki Tea Co.	Bhelenguri	19	1,169	80	735	
40. Rangumati	Munshi Mandhan Salkia	Kathiatoli	12	468	67	41	
41. Rengbeng	Chabua Tea Co.	Duar Salana	20	523	376	803	
42. Sakimburi	Salana Tea Co.	Kathiatoli	16	966	78	126	
43. Sakmuthi	Ditto	Ditto	14	680	258	623	
44. Sivani	Consolidated Tea and Lands Association Co., Ltd.	Chutal	29	9,921	670	838	
45. Sonari	Kaliabar and Sikani Tea Co., Ltd.	Ditto	31	1,078	558	770	
46. Topotjuri	Ditto	Pubtharia	32	557	Included in Kaliabar.	369	
47. Udmari	Salana Tea Co.	Chalchali	12	812	119	382	
	Messrs. J. E. Barlow and F. Barlow	Bhelenguri	17	731	193	182	

(b) Includes figures for Sonari.

(c) Includes figures for Hatirgon.

(d) Includes figures for Auguri, Gobha, Kutree and Neli.

STATEMENT B.

STATEMENT.—B. *List of Post Offices.*

Post Office.	Mauza in which situated.	Post Office.	Mauza in which situated.
Chapanalla ...	Chalchali.	Nakhola ...	Gobha.
Dhing ...	Dhing.	Neli* ...	Uttarkhola.
Jakhalabandha ...	Chutialgaon.	Nowgong*	Nowgong town.
Jaluguti ...	Charaitali.	Puranigudam ...	Chalchali.
Kampur ...	Kampur.	Raha* ...	Barapujia.
Kathiatali ...	Kathiatali.	Salana° ..	Duar Salana.
Lumding*	Lumding Mikir.	Samaguri ...	Bhelenguri.
Misa* ...	Bhelenguri.	Silghat* ...	Pubtharia.

* Combined post and telegraph office.

STATEMENT C.

STATEMENT C.

List of the most important trading villages.

Mauza or Tahsil.	Village.	No. of shops.	Mauza or Tahsil.	Village.	No. of shops.
Pabtharia mauza ...	Silghat ...	8	Rangkhang mauza ...	Amreng ...	3
Chutial " ...	Jakhalabandha ...	9		Barthalangcha... ..	7
	Nij Chutial ..	4		Hangkramukh ..	4
Barbhagia " ...	Mariagaon ...	3		Kolonga ...	6
Samaguri tahsil ...	Puranigudum ..	10		Langorimukh ..	5
Nowgong " ...	Bargaon II ...	10	Raha tahsil ..	Amchoi ...	4
	Nowgong Town ...	41		Chaparmukh ...	8
	Phulaguri ...	4		Dharamtul ...	3
Kathiatali mauza ..	Segunbari ...	6		Laopani ...	3
	Chari Ali ...	4		Neli ...	3
Jamunamukh " ...	Kathkatiagaon ...	3		Baha ...	9
Langpber " ...	Diphu (Railway station) ...	3	Tetelia mauza ..	Bhakaigaon ...	3
				Marigaon ...	3
			Charaibabi " ...	Jalaguti ...	10
			Mikirbheta " ..	Nij Mikirgaon..	3

STATEMENT D.

5

STATEMENT D.

List of Markets.

Mauza or Tahsil.	Village.	Day of the week on which market is held.	Mauza or Tahsil.	Village.	Day of the week on which market is held.
Pubtharia mauza	Silghat ...	Everyday.	Jamunamukh mauza	Kathkatiagaon	Wednesday.
Chautial "	Jakhalabandha	Sunday.	Rangkhang "	Borthalangcha	Tuesday.
Samaguri tahsil ...	Chapanalla ...	Sunday.		Hangkramukh	Monday.
	Jiajuri ...	Saturday.		Nij Rangkhang	Varies.
	Samaguri ...	Sunday.	Raha tahsil ..	Amchoi ...	Monday.
	Topotjuri ...	Do.		Baugaldhara	Wednesday.
Nowgong "	Nowgong ...	Everyday.		Chaparmukh	Thursday.
	Phulaguri ...	Saturday.		Khola ...	Tuesday.
Kandali mauza ...	Kandali ...	Tuesday.		Neli ...	Monday.
	Chengmara ...	Sunday.		Raha ...	Sunday and Wednesday.
Kampur "	Kampur ...	Friday.	Charaibabi mauza ...	Jaluguti ..	Friday.
Garubet "	Singimari ...	Sunday.	Gobha "	Nakhola ...	Sunday.

STATEMENT E.

STATEMENT E.

List of Fairs.

Mauza or Tahsil.		Village.	Estimated number of people attending.
Mauza Jagial (Sadr Tahsil) ...		Phulaguri ...	1,000 or 1,200
Raha Tahsil ...		Khabigarh ...	400 or 500
		Barapujia ...	Do.
		Kakamari ...	Do.
		Topakuchi ..	Do.
		Bangaldhara ...	Do.
Mauza Gobha ...		Jun bil ...	400
		Nakhola ...	300
„ Nij Tetelia ...		Kholagaon ...	500 or 600
		Kumaigaon ...	900 or 1,000
		Gonamara ...	200 or 300
		Marigaon ...	700 or 800
„ Nij Ghugua ...		Manipur ...	500
„ Gerua Bakani ...		Pabhakati ...	1,200
		Gumalugaon ...	Do.
		Chenimarigaon ...	400
„ Dandua ...		Dandua and Sapekatigaon ...	500
„ Charaibahi ...		Nij Charaibahi and Patuakata	
		Mikirgaon ...	900
„ Mikirbhatta ...		Mikerbhatta ...	300
		Nij Mikirgaon Tehulia bil ...	1,100
		Bangaldhara ...	400
		Paghali ...	500
		Molan Kunora ...	500 or 600
„ Hatichong ...		Chamuagaon and Nij Hatichong	300 or 400

TABLE I.

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TABLE I.
RAINFALL.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shown below the name of each station.

MONTHS.				Average rainfall in inches.		
				Sikani. (11 years.)	Nowgong. (45 years.)	Lanka. (5 years.)
January	...	...	...	0.55	0.77	0.28
February	...	...	...	0.71	0.98	0.44
March	...	...	...	2.60	2.44	2.52
April	...	...	...	6.44	5.43	3.18
May	...	...	...	9.86	9.12	3.48
June	...	...	...	11.07	12.34	5.51
July	...	...	...	16.60	16.05	8.21
August	...	...	...	15.62	14.74	8.05
September	...	...	...	11.24	10.79	6.94
October	...	...	...	4.43	3.67	3.14
November	...	..	...	0.34	0.49	0.06
December	...	...	...	0.36	0.28	0.37
Total of year	...	...	...	79.82	77.10	42.18

TABLE II.

Distribution of population.

Tahsil or mauza.	Popula- tion in 1901.	Popula- tion in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Popula- tion per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea garden.
Nowgong Tahsil ...	35,737	50,514	— 14,777	92.49	386	37
Samaguri „ ...	30,639	38,160	— 7,521	144.42	212	7,457
Raha „ ...	29,333	50,712	— 21,379	172.64	169	1,172
Chutialgaon mauza ...	5,777	8,028	— 2,251	12.44	464	1,811
Pubtharia „ ...	6,034	5,609	+ 425	48.42	124	811
Barbhagia „ ...	7,896	5,837	+ 2,059	29.98	263	1,827
Dhing „ ...	9,116	11,844	— 2,728	109.93	82	.....
Juria „ ...	2,723	5,938	— 3,215	124.34	21	.....
Kachamari „ ...	6,116	9,070	— 2,954	28.04	218	.....
Hatichong „ ...	8,963	10,719	— 1,756	2.170	413	.....
Barkandali „ ...	7,216	9,657	— 2,441	24.43	295	1,602
Rangkang and Nomati mauzas ...	17,184	25,685	— 8,501	808.18	21	.....
Kampur mauza ...	4,611	6,373	— 1,762	19.75	233	.....
Garubhat „ ...	3,727	7,658	— 3,931	85.90	43	404
Kathiatali „ ...	2,900	4,043	— 1,143	17.50	165	482
Nij Jamunamukh mauza „ Ghurgua and Dandua mauzas ...	3,993	6,184	— 2,191	40.28	99	.....
Mikirbheta mauza ...	12,059	14,853	— 2,794	91.33	132	.....
Charaibahi „ ...	11,394	13,861	— 2,467	63.22	180	...
Mayang „ ...	5,359	6,667	— 1,308	19.91	269	...
Gerua and Bokani „ ...	4,706	7,368	— 2,662	118.84	39	.....
Nij Tetelia „ ...	9,901	13,316	— 3,415	219.45	45	.....
Gobha „ ...	5,831	9,264	— 3,433	43.33	134	.....
Duar Bamuni „ ...	2,956	4,822	— 1,866	33.33	88	171
Duar Salana „ ...	1,736	1,146	+ 590	139.99	12	...
Duar Bagari „ ...	7,594	5,538	+ 2,056	249.55	30	3,757
Duar Amlaparat „ ...	2,483	1,967	+ 516	209.55	11	732
Duar Dikharu „ ...	4,099	4,791	— 692	872.70	17	.....
Duar Kathiatali „ ...	749	884	— 135			
Langpher „ ...	844	1,116	— 272			
Jamunapar „ ...	1,259	1,488	— 229			
Lumding Kachari „ ...	2,044	2,736	— 692			
„ Kuki „ ...	6,181	1,459	+ 4,722			
„ Mikir „ ...						
Total district ...	261,160	347,307	— 86,147	(a) 3,842.51	68	20,263

(a) The area of the district was furnished by the Assistant Surveyor-General and does not tally with the sum total of the area of the mauzas, as the latter figures were obtained from the District Officer.

TABLE III.

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TABLE III.
General statistics of population.

Particulars.				Persons.	Males.	Females.
POPULATION—						
	1901 ..			261,160	132,995	128,165
	1891 ...			347,307	179,374	167,933
	1881 ...			314,893	162,637	152,256
	1872 .			260,233	135,031	125,207
VARIATION—						
	1891-1901 ...			— 86,147	— 46,379	— 39,768
	1881-1891 ...			+ 32,414	+ 16,737	+ 15,677
	1872-1881 ...			+ 54,655	+ 27,606	+ 27,049
RELIGION—						
	1901					
Total Hindus ...	...	...	...	167,709	85,265	82,444
Mahapurushias ..	...	...	...	83,105	40,318	42,787
Other Vaishnavas...	...	...	...	45,994	23,590	22,404
Saktists ...	...	...	...	13,135	7,009	6,126
Sivaïtes ..	...	...	...	644	499	145
Muhammadans ...	...	...	...	12,578	6,784	5,794
Animistic ...	...	...	...	79,767	40,290	39,477
Total Christians ...	...	...	...	593	305	288
Anglican Communion ...	...	...	...	144	79	65
Baptist ...	...	...	...	396	187	209
Other religions ...	...	...	...	513	351	162
CIVIL CONDITION—						
Unmarried ..	...	...	...	132,904	74,803	58,101
Married ...	...	...	...	95,005	49,530	45,475
Widowed ...	...	...	...	33,251	8,662	24,589
LITERACY—						
Literate in Assamese ...	...	...	...	5,667	5,542	125
Literate in English ..	...	...	...	707	678	29
Illiterate ...	...	...	...	253,851	125,878	127,973
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—						
Assamese ...	...	...	...	171,258	85,039	86,219
Eastern Hindi ...	...	...	...	14,120	8,444	5,676
Bengali ...	...	...	...	14,889	8,068	6,821
Lalung ...	...	...	...	12,612	5,968	6,644
Mikir ...	...	...	...	34,273	17,399	16,874

Note.—The figures for 1891 and the preceding years are taken from Imperial Table II. page 2 of the Census of India-Volume IV. A. Assam. Part II. Tables.

TABLE IV.

Birth place, race, caste and occupation.

		Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH PLACE—				
Born in the district ..	...	226,393	111,406	114,987
" " other parts of Province ..	...	5,138	4,044	1,094
" " Chota Nagpur ..	...	10,572	5,491	5,081
" " other parts of Bengal ..	...	6,836	4,689	2,147
" " United Provinces ..	...	2,044	2,023	1,021
" " Central Province ..	...	6,205	3,082	3,123
" " Nepal ..	...	1,118	886	232
" " Elsewhere ..	...	1,854	1,374	480
Total,, outside Assam ..	...	29,829	17,545	12,084
RACE AND CASTE—				
Boria ..	...	7,799	3,708	4,091
Brahman ..	...	6,115	3,356	2,759
Chutiya ..	...	6,663	3,216	3,447
Eurasian ..	...	4	4	...
European (a) ..	...	93	62	31
Jugi ..	...	15,045	7,334	7,711
Kachari ..	...	11,823	6,700	5,123
Kalita ..	...	16,326	8,419	7,907
Kayastha ..	...	2,149	1,337	912
Kewat and Kaibartta ..	...	13,372	6,764	6,508
Koch and Rajbansi ..	...	34,191	16,745	17,446
Lalung ..	...	28,986	13,542	15,443
Mikir ..	...	35,730	17,992	17,738
Natiyal ..	...	18,887	9,316	9,541
Namasudra ..	...	5,299	2,628	2,671
OCCUPATION—				
Workers ..	...	160,197	86,417	73,780
Dependents ..	...	100,963	...	...
TOTAL SUPPORTED—				
Landholders ..	...	208,906	103,719	105,187
Tenants ..	...	5,602	2,863	2,739
Garden labourers...	...	19,105	9,709	9,396
General labourers...	...	4,073	3,176	902

(a). Includes allied races.

TABLE V.

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TABLE V.

Vital statistics.

Year.	Population under registra- tion in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox	Fever	Bowel complaints.
1901 ...	261,160	29.84	25.36	0.13	0.05	19.84	1.53
1902 ...	261,160	27.70	21.35	0.08	0.16	16.19	1.10
1903 ...	261,160	35.17	26.90	6.73	0.52	14.39	1.21
1904 ...	261,160	34.23	30.13	1.39	3.49	16.53	4.21
1905 ...							
1906 ...							
1907 ...							
1908 ...							
1909 ...							
1910 ...							
1911 ...							
1912 .							

TABLE VI.

TABLE
Crops

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area	235,064	246,692	239,863	258,099
Rice	143,151	146,338	134,998	156,882
Mustard	33,673	39,229	46,311	46,623
Sugarcane	1,687	1,532	1,621	1,789
Pulses	13,939	16,377	14,983	15,266
All other crops	42,614	43,216	41,950	37,539

PARTICULARS.	1901.	1902.	1903.	1904.
TEA.				
Number of gardens ...	49	47	47	43
Area in acres	48,775	48,650	51,807	50,238
Area under plant. { Held by Europeans ...	11,805	11,413	11,300	11,639
,, ,, Natives ...	735	1,118	911	318
Outturn of manufactured tea in lbs.	4,470,548	4,231,103	4,417,611	4,563,544
Labour force	14,434	14,026	13,755	12,461
Labourers including dependents imported during the year* ...	1,341	Not available	1,117	417

* From 1903 immigration statistics relate to period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE VI.

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VI.

statistics,

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

1905.	1906	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911	1912.

TABLE
Reserved

Name of Reserve	Area in square miles.	Date of constitution.	Character of Forests.			
				1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Sonaikushi ...	17	17th Mar. 1887.	Rocky hills about one-tenth of which is covered with Sal Sida and Koroï are common.	4	23	30
Kholshat ...	26	25th Nov. 1887.	Partly hills and partly plains about one-third of which is covered with Sal. Dense evergreen forest partially explored. Poma, Sida, Ajbar, and Koroï are common.	367	489	392
Rangkhang ...	10	17th Mar. 1887.	Plain forest about one-eighth of which is covered with Sal, Poma, Koroï Sida and Paroli common.	nil.	nil.	nil.
Dabaka ...	45	17th Oct. 1878.	Hills. The plain portion is covered with Sal, Nahor, Sam and Pacha bamboos.	33	6	41
Sildharampur ...	6		Hills. Three small plots of Sal. Dense evergreen forest, not explored.	11	nil.	nil.
Jungthung ...	13	27th Sep. 1889.	All hills. One patch of young Sal forest not explored.	nil.	nil.	nil.
Bamuni ...	1		Plain forest. Thoroughly explored. All covered with young Sal.	60	153	151
Suang ...	10	30th July 1891.	Hills. One-eighth of which is covered with Sal. Poma, Koroï and Sida common.	241	580	208
Dju Valley ...	8		Hills. Plains about one-half is covered with Sal. Sam, Poma, Nageswar (Wallachii) common.	621	1,695	2,379
Kukrakata Hill...	6		Hill. No Sal. Dense evergreen forests, Paroli Sida and Koroï common.	20	25	61

TABLE VII.

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VII.

forests.

RECEIPT.								
1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08.	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
21								
1,882								
nil.								
14								
nil.								
nil.								
nil.								
136								
5,509								
18								

TABLE
Fire protection and outturn of timber

DETAILS.	1900-01	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Area under protection ... sq. miles ...	143	143	143	143
Area protected ... sq. miles ...	143	143	143	143
Percentage ...	100	100	100	100
Cost ... Rs.	872	611	705	661
RESERVED FORESTS—				
Area ... sq. miles ..	143	143	143	143
Outturn (Government and purchaser only).				
Timber .. cft. ...	4,843	11,700	10,628	21,329
Fuel ... cft. ...	20,356	3,271	3,420	1,050
UNCLASSIFIED STATE FORESTS—				
Area ... sq. miles ...	2,989	3,453	3,418	3,436
Outturn (Government and purchaser only).				
Timber ... cft. ...	48,270	56,021	73,648	56,065
Fuel ... cft. ...	36,918	24,640	35,584	19,924
Rubber ... Rs.	609	4	25	94
Forest receipts ... Rs.	10,258	11,587	14,779	18,189
Forest expenditure ... Rs.	13,627	13,966	13,447	18,300
Surplus or deficit ... Rs.	-3,369	-2,379	+1,332	-111

TABLE VIII.

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VIII.

and fuel and value of minor forest produce.

1904-05	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE IX.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

			Nowaone.		
			Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.
1880	{ 2nd Week of February	...	13	7½	16
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	16	7½	20
1890	{ 2nd Week of February	...	16	8	20
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	13	9	20
1900	{ 2nd Week of February	...	20	9	20
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	14	9	12
1901	{ 2nd Week of February	...	12	9	13
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	7	9	13
1902	{ 2nd Week of February	...	13	9	13
	{ 2nd Week of August	..	8	9	14
1903	{ 2nd Week of February	...	11	9	14
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	10	10½	12½
1904	{ 2nd Week of February	..	16	10	16
	{ 2nd Week of August	...	13	11	16
1905	{ 2nd Week of February	...	16	11	16
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1906	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1907	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1908	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1909	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1910	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1911	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			
1912	{ 2nd Week of February	...			
	{ 2nd Week of August	...			

TABLE

Criminal and

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True	Detected.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting and unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ...	4	2	3	3	6	4		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity &c. ..	4	3	6	6	4	3		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Section 302-304, 307, 308 and 396 ..	2	...	3	3	5	4		
v) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Section 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ..	7	5	12	7	9	7		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356 and 357 ..	5	4	3	2	4	3		
vi) Other serious offences against the person ..	7	4	5	4	8	6		
(vii) Dacoity. Section 395, 397 and 398 ..	...	..	...	..	..	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-440 ..	8	4	1	1	1	..		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass. Sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460 ..	48	15	54	13	34	17		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Section 341-344 ..	5	2	8	4	4	4		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property ..	...	...	..	...	1	..		
(xii) Theft Sections 379 and 382 ...	127	71	118	60	103	55		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	6	6	15	15	15	11		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	9	4	10	3	16	10		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	5	4	1	1	4	3		
TOTAL ...	237	124	239	122	214	127		
CIVIL JUSTICE.								
Number of suits for money and moveables ...	1,269		1,050					
Title and other suits ...	22		27					
Rent suits ..								

Civil Justice.

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TABLE XII.

TABLE

*Fluctuations in
Proportion of fluctuating*

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Settled area ...	260,304	258,330	265,889	272,829
Area excluded from settlement ...	43,482	42,033	26,651	22,828
Area included in settlement ...	31,946	40,530	34,685	30,084
Revenue demand ... Rs.	5,50,558	4,48,941	4,67,478	4,77,613

TABLE

Miscellaneous

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Fisheries ...	10,056	9,828	11,300	13,930
House tax ...	9,261	6,693	6,147	7,043
Other heads ...	460	76	392	759
Total ...	19,777	16,597	17,839	21,732

TABLE XII.

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XI.

*settled area.**area to settled area in 1903-04—31 per cent.*

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

XII.

land revenue.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

TABLE
Finance

Principal heads of revenue.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (Ordinary) ...	5,03,260	5,60,677	4,60,395	4,66,121	4,76,614
Do. (Miscellaneous) ...	30,027	19,777	16,597	17,889	21,732
Provincial rates ...	33,420	36,693	29,373	31,103	32,082
Judicial stamps ...	23,088	21,275	19,343	19,303	17,568
Non-judicial stamps ...	4,752	4,106	3,734	3,996	3,923
Opium ...	2,84,103	2,37,163	2,29,142	2,58,564	2,71,876
Country spirits ...	4,424	28,190	28,883	25,380	22,866
Ganja ...	5,248	14,100	13,611	16,147	14,381
Other heads of excise ...	930	424	507	1,181	677
Assessed taxes ...	9,348	9,912	8,724	9,122	6,876
No. of assesses per 1000 of population ...	1	1	1	1	1
Forests ...	10,611	10,258	11,587	14,779	18,189
Registration ...	441	203	241	264	288
TOTAL ...	9,09,652	9,42,778	8,22,187	8,63,749	8,87,022

TABLE

Land

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	201,509	199,570	207,079	213,844
Held on ordinary tenures ..	193,813	191,874	199,383	206,148
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj) ..	2,314	2,314	2,314	2,314
Held at half rates (Nisfikhiraj) ...	5,382	5,382	5,382	5,382
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	56,229	56,158	56,161	56,318
Area of fee simple and commuted grants ...	21,349	21,349	21,349	21,349
Area settled under other special rules	469	469	469	469
Area settled on 30 years lease ...	30,998	30,998	30,998	31,155
Area held under ordinary rules or resettled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	3,413	3,342	3,345	3,345
Total land settled under other tenures ...	2,566	2,602	2,649	2,667
Total settled area of the district ...	260,304	258,330	265,889	272,829
Total unsettled area of the district ...	2,199,216	2,201,190	2,193,631	2,186,691

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tenures.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909 10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

TABLE XIV. A.

Total area and unsettled area in each tahsil and mauza in 1902-03.

Tahsils and mauzas.	Total area. Square miles.	Un-settled area. Square miles.	Remarks.	Tahsils and mauzas.	Total area. Square miles.	Un-settled area. Square miles.	Remarks.
Tahsils-Nowong	..	91	39	Gobha	..	33	Includes 17 square miles of reserved forests.
Baha ..	..	174	131	Hatichong	..	32	Includes 1 square mile of reserved forests.
Samaguri	..	145	77	Jamunamukh	..	40	House tax paying mauza.
Mauzas-Barbhagia	..	30	1	Jamunapar	..	Not known.	
Charaitahi	..	20	12	Juria ..	..	124	
Chutialgaon	..	13	4	Kachamari	..	28	
Dandua	..	25	16	Kampur ..	..	20	
Dhing ..	..	109	61	Kandali ..	..	24	
Duar Amla	..	Not known.	House tax paying mauza.	Kathiatoli	..	18	
" Bagari	..	210	202	Langpher	..	Not known.	House tax paying mauza.
" Bamuni	..	140	135	Lumding (Kachari)	..	Do.	Do.
" Dikharu	..	Not known.	Do. 24 Do. Do.	Do. (Kuti) ..	..	Do.	Do.
" Kathiatoli	..	Do.	House tax paying mauza.	Do. (Mibir) ..	..	Do.	Do.
" Salana	..	249	234	Mikirbitha	..	68	
Garubhat	..	86	81	Mayang	..	119	
Geras ..	..	154	136	Namat	..	338	Includes 7 square miles of reserved forests.
Ghurna	..	63	55	Putharia	..	48	
	..			Banghang	..	475	Includes 10 square miles of reserved forests.
	..			Tetolia	..	41	

TABLE

Excise

PRINCIPAL HEADS.		1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Number of opium shops	...	144	149	144	134
Amount paid for licenses	Rs.	39,628	39,104	41,280	44,674
		md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Quantity of opium issued	...	173 11 1	166 28 0	190 24 0	200 2 0
Duty on opium sold	Rs.	1,97,535	1,90,038	2,17,284	2,27,202
Number of ganja shops	...	14	14	14	14
Amount paid for licenses	Rs.	7,488	6,549	6,616	6,898
		md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued	...	19 18 0	19 32 0	26 19 0	22 10 0
Duty on ganja sold	Rs.	6,612	7,062	9,531	7,483
Number of country spirit shops	...	18	17	16	14
Amount paid for licenses	Rs.	28,190	28,883	25,380	22,866
Number of distilleries	...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued	...	...	...	...	...
Still-head duty	Rs.	...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops	...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses	Rs.	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue	Rs.	424	507	1,131	677

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revenue.

[illegible]

TABLE XVI.

Income and expenditure of Nowgong Local Board.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	33,421	36,692	Post office ...	1,867	804
Police ...	4,741	3,598	Administration ...	236	226
Tolls on ferries ...	4,429	2,856	Education ...	12,475	10,050
Contributions ...	8,591	6,220	Medical ...	3,113	10,831
Debt ...	...	225	Civil Works ...	26,730	24,583
Miscellaneous ...	112	130	Debt ...	...	310
			Contributions ...	...	2,000
			Miscellaneous ...	2,896	1,732
Total ...	51,304	49,721	Total ...	47,317	50,546

TABLE XVII.

MUNICIPAL.

Nowgong Municipality.

Sources of income.	Income.		Heads of expenditure.	Expenditure.	
	1895-96.	1900-01		1895-96.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	1	1,814	Administration ...	794	1,153
Tax on houses and lands	1,478	2,005	Conservancy ...	2,648	3,574
Pounds ...	2,892	2,062	Public Works ...	3,130	2,174
Fees from markets ...	350	543	Public instruction ...	165	274
Grants from Government			Drainage ...	1,047	2,000
and Local Funds ...	5,000	5,000	Other heads ...	2,538	1,022
Other sources ...	1,455	2,241	Closing balance ...	926	3,468
Total ...	11,176	13,665	Total ...	11,176	13,665

TABLE XIX.

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TABLE XVIII.

Strength of police force.

PARTICULARS.				1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.						
SUPERVISING STAFF.						
District and Assistant Superintendents	...			1	1	1
Inspectors ...	...	...	...	1	1	1
SUBORDINATE STAFF.						
Sub-Inspectors	...	...	...	4	4	15
Head Constables	...	...	...	8	14	11
Constables	...	...	...	86	128	166
Total expenditure	...	...	Rs.	20,783	26,264	44,399

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.

TABLE XIX.

Police stations and outposts in 1904.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.				SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
				Sub-Inspector.	Head Constable.	Constables.	TOTAL.
Jagi	Outpost	...	...	1	...	6	7
Jamunamukh	"	...	...	1	...	7	8
Kaliabar	"	...	...	1	...	6	7
Kuthari	Roadpost	...	...	...	1	4	5
Nakhola	Outpost	...	...	1	...	5	6
Nowgong	Police station	...	...	3	...	12	15
Raha	"	...	...	2	...	10	12
Samaguri	"	...	...	2	...	10	12

TABLE XX.

TABLE XX.
JAIL STATISTICS.

Nowgong Jail.

PARTICULARS.			1881	1891	1901
Average daily population	...	{ Male ...	47.48	74.46	82.38
	...	{ Female ...	1.94	.97	.02
Rate of mortality per 1,000	...	...	...	53	.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	Rs.	3,270	4,276	5,911
Cost per prisoner (a) (excluding civil prisoner)	...	...	20	33	59
Profits on jail manufacture	...	...	2,903	1,912	608
Earnings per prisoner (b)	...	...	67	28	13

(a) On food and clothing only.

(b) Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE
Edu-

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>High Schools—</i>				
Number	1	1	1	1
" of boys reading in High School Classes ...	33	35	32	40
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	45	43	50	69
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	95	110	130	119
<i>Middle English School—</i>				
Number	1	1	1	2
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	2	3	6	...
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	31	43	27	101
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools—</i>				
Number	3	3	3	3
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	44	41	36	46
" of boys reading in Primary Classes	172	154	207	156
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools—</i>				
Number	2	1	1	1
" of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes ...	30	18	18	20
" of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes ...	60	13	27	18
<i>Lower Primary Schools—</i>				
Number	108	115	112	118
" of boys reading in three Upper Classes ...	(a)	(a)	1,724	1,526
" of boys reading in Lower Classes ...	3,834	4,069	2,422	2,249
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools ...	2	2	3	2
" of girls reading (whether in girls' or boys' Schools) in—				
High Schools	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools ...	7	6	1	...
Middle Vernacular Schools ...	1	...	...	...
Upper Primary Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Lower Primary Schools ...	139	176	155	110

(a) Separate figures.

TABLE XXII.

Educational finance.

PARTICULARS.	No. of Institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM.					AMOUNT PER HEAD OF SCHOLAR.		
		Provincial Revenues.	District and Municipal Funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.			
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	As.	P.
Training and special schools ...	2	180	184	...	...	364	45	8	0
Secondary boys' school:—									
Upper (High) ...	1	2,900	...	2,879	...	5,779	35	7	3
Lower (Middle) ...	4	1,334	708	720	776	3,538	14	7	0
Primary boys' schools:—									
Upper ...	2	...	297	74	70	441	6	2	0
Lower ...	108	...	7,610	485	5	8,100	2	4	7
Girls' schools ..	2	...	324	...	271	595	9	2	5
TOTAL ...	119	4,414	9,123	4,168	1,122	18,817	4	9	6

TABLE XXIII.

Medical.

				1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries	...	...		1	4	13
Daily average number of in-door patients	...	...		9.32	11.14	33.43
" " " out-door "	...	...		6.75	134.87	456.58
Cases treated	...	...		1,857	34,939	101,268
Operations performed	...	...		16	255	1,159
Total income	...	...	Rs.	2,704	6,259	21,238
Income from Government	...	...	Rs.	1,335	2,089	9,699
Income from Local and Municipal funds	...	...	Rs.	293	2,232	9,350
Subscriptions	...	...	Rs.	1,000	981	849
Total expenditure	...	...	Rs.	2,051	6,162	21,004
Expenditure on establishment	...	...	Rs.	912	2,818	9,768
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated	...	...	...	4.16(a)	28.21	26.42
Cost per case	...	...	Rs.	Not available	0 1 10	0 2 3

(a) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE

Dispen

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.	
Nowgong ..	8,701	9,809	7,025	10,164	7,388	11,547	7,232	11,519	10,607	13,020		
Raha ..	1,389	8,000	1,175	8,080	2,362	7,339	1,369	8,353	1,558	10,364		
Silghat ..	1,326	8,690	1,244	10,100	1,220	10,279	1,968	10,786	1,676	9,460		
Puranigudam ...	1,396	11,159	1,318	12,258	1,148	13,428	1,527	13,065	1,668	14,408		
Kampur ..	1,335	6,436	1,216	6,396	2,067	6,276	1,349	8,936	1,212	8,014		
Nanai ..	1,251	8,870	1,104	8,306	1,022	7,020	1,461	7,556	1,668	7,354		
Jaluguti ..	1,333	6,897	1,080	7,588	884	7,569	1,351	9,716	1,461	8,573		
Jagi ..	1,255	8,882	1,180	4,311	1,138	4,368	1,260	5,033	1,160	7,122		
Borjoha ..	1,296	6,805	1,043	6,254	1,044	7,171	1,348	7,858	1,343	10,035		
Dhing ...	1,164	9,492	1,204	10,168	1,320	10,203	1,472	10,463	1,370	10,043		

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saries.

[illegible]

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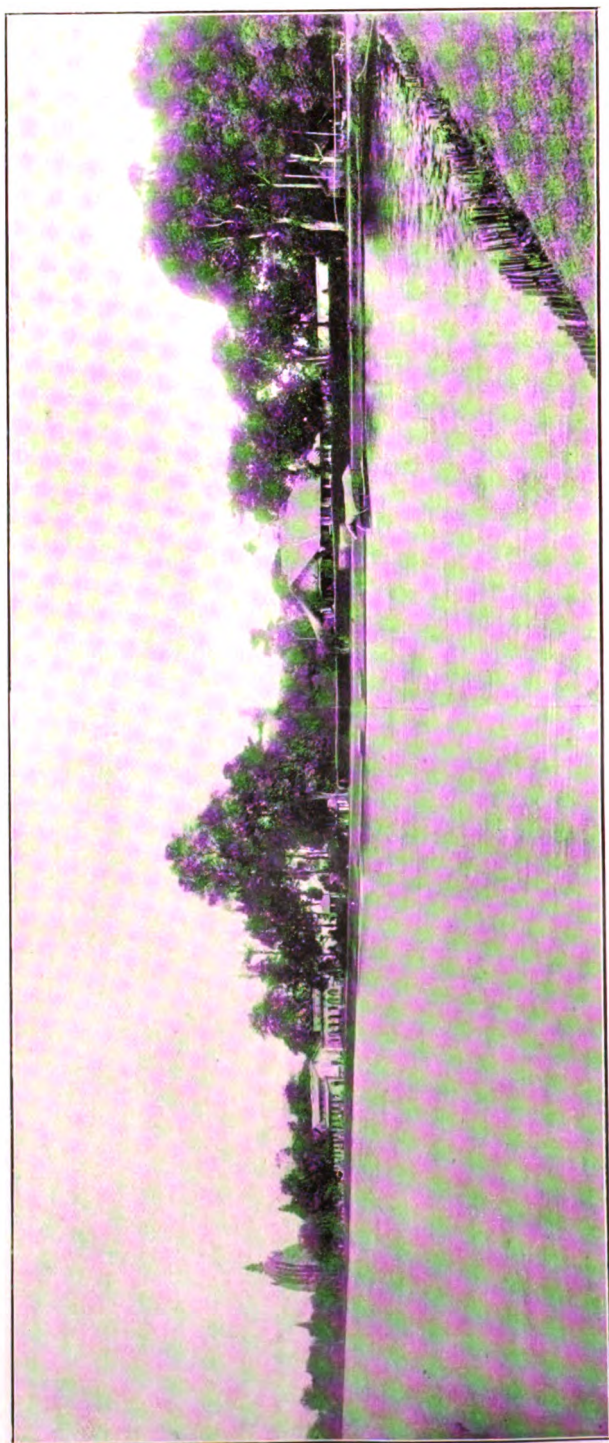
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SIBSAGAR TANK.

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME VII

Sibsagar.

BY

B. C. ALLEN, c.s.

Allahabad:

PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS

1908.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of Sibsagar is nothing more than a general description of the district as a whole, and does not, as Gazetteers generally do, include a directory. There are, however, hardly any places in the district which are worthy of the name of town, and the little villages in which the people live do not call for a separate and detailed description. Places which are centres of local trade or of some industry have been specified by name, but to attempt to describe each of these villages would merely have resulted in the most tedious iteration. It should be added that the Gazetteer was compiled at a time when Assam was still a separate Province, and that when the Province is mentioned it is to Assam and not to Eastern Bengal and Assam that reference is made. My acknowledgments are due to the Deputy Commissioner for his kindness in examining the work in proof.

SHILLONG :
October 1905. }

B. C. ALLEN.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General aspects—Hills—The Majuli—
River system—Geology—Climate—Rainfall—Storms and earth-
quakes—Fauna.

The district of Sibsagar lies between $25^{\circ} 49'$ and $27^{\circ} 16'$ N. and $93^{\circ} 2'$ and $95^{\circ} 22'$ E, and covers an area of 4,996 square miles. On the north it is bounded by the districts of Darrang and Lakhimpur, on the east by Lakhimpur and hills occupied by tribes of independent Nagas, on the south by these hills and by the Naga Hills district, and on the west by the district of Nowgong. Area and boundaries.

Sibsagar falls into three natural divisions. The most populous and important portion is a wide and healthy plain lying between the Naga Hills and the Brahmaputra. North of that river is the Majuli, a great island no less than 485 square miles in area, which is separated from Lakhimpur by the Kherkutia Suti, at one time the main channel of the Brahmaputra, and the Subansiri. On the east, a considerable portion of the Mikir Hills and the upper valley of the Dhansiri have recently been incorporated within the boundaries of the district.

Throughout the whole of its course through Sibsagar, the Brahmaputra is bounded on the south by a belt of flooded land varying from three or four to as much as seven or eight miles in width. The country in this part is covered with high reed jungle, interspersed with The marshes near the Brahmaputra.

swamps or *bils* and magnificent stretches of rich fodder grass. There are few Assamese villages in this tract, and there is little cultivation except of summer rice, followed by pulse or mustard. Such inhabitants as there are, are Miris, whose houses are built on piles which raise them well above the level of the floods, or Nepalese graziers, whose buffaloes wander at will over the marshes and sandy *churs*. West of Bokaghat this strip of inundated country is seven or eight miles in breadth, and affords a splendid shelter for every kind of game. There are patches of tree forest in which wild elephants and mithun can shelter from the noonday heat, and stretches of high reeds impenetrable to any but the largest animals. Here and there in this sea of grass are little muddy pools in which the great rhinoceros loves to wallow, surrounded by reeds and grasses from fifteen to twenty feet in height. There are *bils*, or shallow meres, lying in the bottom of basins carpeted with luscious fodder grass, and enclosed by a wall of jungle. Here the wild pig come and burrow for their food, and the wild buffalo wallow in the water or lie beneath the shade of the gigantic reeds. Near the tree jungle there is higher ground, where the grasses cannot grow so rank and the deer can make their home.

**The Sibsa-
gar plain.**

South of this flooded tract and east of the Dhansiri there is a wide plain, on which there is hardly any jungle to be seen. On the lower land the staple crop is transplanted rice, while the higher levels have been planted out with tea. The landscape, as a rule, is one of rural plenty. On every side stretch fields of waving rice,

and on every side the view is bounded by groves of feathery bamboos, and slender areca palms, in which the houses of the cultivators lie concealed. The tea gardens themselves have little to appeal to the lover of the picturesque. The rows of bushes are pruned down to one uniform level, and the monotony of this expanse of green is only relieved by the cool lines, the factory, and the planter's bungalow. But they have, as a rule, been opened out on forest land, and the noble trees, with which the cultivated portion is frequently shut in, afford a pleasant contrast to the trim neatness of the handiwork of man.

Further south there is a belt of forest along the foot of the hills, but the area under timber is gradually diminishing, and fields of rice and tea gardens are appearing in its place. West of the Disai, the appearance of the plain is diversified by the protrusion of the sub-soil, and rice is often grown in curious depressions, called *hoolas*, which are three or four feet below the level of the higher land. The ground between these *hoolas* is used for grazing, or for the village site, and is often planted out with sugarcane.

The Dhansiri is no longer the administrative boundary of anything more important than a mauza, but, as a matter of fact, it is the natural boundary of Upper Assam. East of that river is a broad fertile plain stretching right through Sibsagar and Lakhimpur to the Noa Dihing. The whole of this plain is very homogeneous in its features. It is healthy, populous, and well cultivated, a country of prosperity and progress.

The Dhansiri the natural boundary of Upper Assam.

West of the Dhansiri it is Central Assam, a country of hill, forest, and marsh, inhabited by primitive tribes of Bodo origin, or by Assamese from the lower part of the valley. This country has only felt to a very modified degree the quickening effects of the great tea industry, and, during the last twenty years, the population has been more than decimated by *kala-azar*, that terrible scourge from which Upper Assam has fortunately been free. The part of Sibsagar that lies west of the Dhansiri differs as much from the part east of that river as Nowgong does from Lakhimpur, or the Jaintia Hills from the Jaintia Parganas.

**The Mikir
Hills.**

The upper valley of the Dhansiri and of the Doiang is covered with dense tree forest which is almost entirely destitute of population. A wonderful view of this forest can be obtained from one of the outer ranges of the Naga Hills. North, east, and west, as far as the eye can reach, there is nothing but a pathless wilderness of trees. In the far distance on the north the blue ranges of the Mikir Hills can be discerned some twenty-five miles away, but on the east and west there is forest *et præterea nihil*. The Mikir Hills consist of a mass of sharply serrated ridges, whose steeply sloping sides are green with creeper smothered trees and the bamboo jungle that springs up on the sites of fallowing *jhums*. The outer ranges are not more than 1,500 feet in height, but further back there are hills whose summits are 4,000 feet and more above the level of the sea. Dotted about amongst these forests are to be found the villages of the Mikirs, villages that sometimes consist of but

one or two huge houses, each of which accommodates a family of truly patriarchal proportions. Of all the tribes upon the north-east frontier, the Mikirs are probably the most amenable to law and order, and it is seldom that a European attempts to penetrate into their jungly fastnesses.

North of the Brahmaputra, again, the country is very different. Nearly all of the Majuli lies too low for the cultivation of transplanted rice, and the staple crops are summer rice and mustard. Much of the country is still under high reed jungle, much under fine tree forest, which is rendered beautiful by festoons and loops of creeping cane. It is a country of luxuriant vegetation, of light sandy soil covered with fresh *dub* grass, of deep pools surrounded by umbrageous trees, of village paths and tracks bordered and carpeted with ferns. There is only one road in the island, which crosses it about the centre, and the inhabitants seem quite cut off from the more strenuous and eager life in the neighbourhood of Jorhat. **The Majuli.**

Outside the Mikir Hills the whole of the district is a level plain. Two small hillocks call for special mention, but only on account of the associations with which they are connected, and not from any intrinsic importance of their own. The Charaideo hill in the Dhopabar mauza was once the burial place of the Ahom kings, and the ruins of their tombs are still to be seen, though they were rifled of their treasures by the Muhammadan invaders in the seventeenth century. The Neghereting **Hills.**

hill is a small eminence near the Brahmaputra on which stands a temple sacred to Mahadeo.

River system.

The whole of the drainage of the district ultimately finds its way into the Brahmaputra. Even at this distance from its mouth, the Brahmaputra is an enormous river. In the cold weather the main channel shrinks to more moderate dimensions, and is surrounded on either side by sandy flats or beds of reeds and grasses. In the rains, when the river is full, it spreads over an enormous extent of country, and from one main bank to the other is a journey of several hours in a canoe or country boat. It is seldom possible to proceed direct, as the various channels of the river enclose numerous large islands. These islands are formed from the silt and sand that impart to the Brahmaputra water its turbid colour, and are formed or washed away, as the main stream slowly oscillates from side to side of the broad strath through which it makes its way.

The tributaries of the Brahmaputra the Dihing and Disang.

During its passage through the district, the Brahmaputra receives many tributaries from the south. On the extreme east is the Dihing, which, for the last few miles of its course, forms the boundary between Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. This river never actually enters the Sibsagar district, and an account of it will be found in the Gazetteer of Lakhimpur. Next to the Dihing is the Disang, which rises in the hills occupied by independent Nagas east of Sibsagar town. It flows a north-easterly course till it reaches British territory, and then curves back and runs westward right along the north of Abhaipur and Silakuti mauzas. When parallel to and about eight miles from Sibsagar town, it takes a bend towards the north,

and finally empties itself into the Brahmaputra after a total course of 136 miles. Its principal tributaries are, on the right bank the Diroi and Dimau, and on the left bank the Taokak and Safrai. The Disang flows in a deep channel and does not change its course, but in the rains it often overtops its banks. The steps which have recently been taken to protect the country in the neighbourhood are described in Chapter IV.

West of the Disang is the Dikho, which rises right up **The Dikho.** in the Naga Hills, where it forms the boundary between British and independent territory. It enters the district south of Nazira, flows past that place and Sibsagar town, and falls into the Brahmaputra after a course of 120 miles, more than half of which, however, lies in the hills. Its principal tributary in Sibsagar is the Darika, which flows a little to the north of Sibsagar town and falls into the Dikho near its mouth. Both of these rivers overtop their banks when in flood, and steps have accordingly been taken to protect the country in the immediate vicinity.

The boundary between Sibsagar and Jorhat is formed **The Jhanzi, Disai, and Kakadanga.** by the Jhanzi, which is 71 miles in length, and, like the other rivers, rises in the Naga Hills. Then comes the Disai (81 miles in length), which flows past Mariani and Jorhat, and in the lower part of its course is called the Bhogdai. This name is said to have been bestowed on it in memory of a feast given by the Ahom Raja to the men he had employed in straightening the river's course. The Kakadanga, which is little more than 40 miles in length, forms the boundary between the subdivisions of Jorhat and Golaghat. These rivers closely resemble one

another in several particulars. They all flow through deep channels and do not change their courses. The bottom is muddy, there is no foreshore, and, unlike the Brahmaputra and its tributaries from the north, there is no alluvial or diluvial action going on. The current as a rule is very slack, but, like all streams rising in the hills, they are liable to sudden freshets, though the Kakadanga is said to be the only one of the three which ever overflows, to the detriment of the villages in the vicinity.

The Dhansiri.

The Dhansiri is the largest river in the district after the Brahmaputra, and, like the others, rises in the Naga Hills. On debouching on the plains it flows a northerly and easterly course between the Naga and the Mikir Hills down a valley which is for the most part covered with dense forest. It passes the town of Golaghat, then makes a bend towards the west, and falls into the Brahmaputra opposite the western end of the Majuli. Its total length is 177 miles.

General tendency of rivers to flow westwards.

West of the Dhansiri the only river of importance is the Diphlu, which for a considerable portion of its course flows parallel with the Brahmaputra. This is a phenomenon which is exhibited in a greater or less degree by almost all the rivers in the district, as the tendency of the drainage is to follow the levels of the country, which naturally fall towards the west. Conspicuous instances of this are to be found in the Tuni and the Gela *bil*. The Tuni is situated in the Majuli, the Gela *bil* in the north of Golaghat; and both of them are merely channels of the Brahmaputra which take off from that river and rejoin it

again at a point lower down in its course.

The greater part of Sibsagar lies too high for the formation of lakes, *bils*, or marshes, and the only ones of any size are situated in the Majuli and the flooded country south of the Brahmaputra. Even here, there are no sheets of water of any considerable size, and, as a rule, the *bils* take the form of deep ponds, very long in proportion to their breadth, which are simply the remains of rivers that have changed their beds. **Bils and marshes.**

The plain is of alluvial origin and consists of a mixture of clay and sand in varying proportions, ranging from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be quite unfit for cultivation. The higher land is apparently the remains of an earlier deposit of alluvium. Mr. Maclaren, in a paper on the Geology of Upper Assam, published in Vol. XXXI, Pt. 4 of the Records of the Geological Survey of India, suggests that the level of the valley is still sinking. Were it stationary, the broad belt of low land lying on either side of the Brahmaputra and many other rivers would soon be raised to flood level by the deposit of the enormous volume of solid matter brought down by these rivers, and would be carried far beyond it by the luxuriant vegetable growth of the country. In the same paper there is an interesting speculation on the formation of the Assam Valley (p. 198—204), but it is too long for reproduction here and cannot easily be summarised. **Geology.**

The only mineral of economic importance in Sibsagar is coal, and even that lies beyond the boundaries **Coal.**

of the district. As, however, much of it is situated in independent Naga territory, and as it is from Sib-sagar that it will be worked, if it is worked at all, it will be convenient to describe these measures in the Sib-sagar Gazetteer. They are situated in the outer ranges of the Naga Hills a little to the south of Nazira, and were visited by Mr. Mallet in 1874-75, whose report will be found in Vol. XII, Pt. 2 of the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India. To the north-east, the coal measures stretch from the Dikho along the watershed between the Safrai and its tributary the Tiru, while south-west they have been traced to a point due north of Tamlu. According to Mr. Mallet, the data, though insufficient to form an estimate of the total quantity of available coal, show that a large quantity must certainly be there. He roughly calculates that in the Safrai section of the field from the north of the Chota Taokak to the south-south-east of Tirugaon there are about ten million tons of marketable coal, while west of the Dikho there are about seven million tons. There are also two small fields in the valleys of the Jhanzi and the Disai, which have not been very thoroughly explored.

For some years past the Assam Company have worked out small quantities of coal for use in their own factories, but not for sale. The question of constructing a tramway from the Santak siding up the valley of the Dikho and embarking on coal mining on an extensive scale is now under consideration. There are hot springs near the Dimapur road about ten miles from Golaghat, and lime is found in the vicinity.

Sibsagar, like the rest of Upper Assam, enjoys a cold **Climate.** winter and a cool and pleasant spring. In October, the rains begin to stop and the nights grow cool, but the real cold weather does not set in till the following month. How sharp is the change can be judged from the fact that the difference between the average minimum for October and November is no less than 11°. December, January, and February are cold and pleasant and in January the average maximum is only 70°. The lowness of the temperature is partly due to the fogs which, in the cold weather, frequently hang over the valley till the day is well advanced. Though unpleasant in themselves, they help to keep the country cool by diminishing the period during which it is exposed to the action of the sun. In March, the thermometer begins to rise, but the copious rains of early spring prevent the development of a hot weather, and it is not till June that the climate really grows unpleasant. The air is then surcharged with moisture, and the damp heat is trying alike to natives and to Europeans. The average maximum and minimum temperature for each month will be found in Table I.

In the east of the district the average rainfall varies **Rainfall.** from 90 to 95 inches in the year, but between the Dhansiri and the Jhanzi it is only between 80 and 82 inches. The Dhansiri valley itself is, for Assam, unusually dry, and the average rainfall at Dimapur is less than 60 inches. November to February are the four dry months in the year; but the special feature in the rainfall of Sibsagar, as of other districts in Assam, is the heavy rain

in April and May, at a time when precipitation in Northern India is at a minimum. Between April and September there is heavy rain, which ranges from 8 to 16 inches per mensem, and March and October each have an average fall of 4 or 5 inches. The rainfall recorded in each month at six different stations in the district will be found in Table II.

Storms and earthquakes.

Sibsagar is never visited by destructive hurricanes, but during the rains a spell of hot dry weather is often closed by a thunder shower, which immediately cools the air, and is on that account extremely welcome. Hail storms occasionally do damage, especially on tea gardens, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Sibsagar, like the rest of Assam, is liable to earthquakes, and the chronicler of Mir Jumla's expedition describes the alarm produced amongst the invaders by one of these unlooked-for visitations. The great earthquake of 1897 was distinctly felt and did considerable damage, though it was as nothing in comparison with the widespread havoc wrought elsewhere. The treasury at Golaghat was injured, and two brick pillars in the engine house at the Jorhat railway station collapsed in ruins. Some damage was done on tea gardens, and here and there short stretches of road were shaken down to the level of the rice fields. Even in Sibsagar the earthquake was a distinctly singular experience, and, had it not been for the extraordinary violence of the shock between Gauhati and Sylhet, it would have taken rank as quite a serious seismic disturbance.

In the more settled portions of the district wild **Fauna.** animals are becoming very scarce, though they are fairly common in the Mikir Hills and the swamp that lies between them and the Brahmaputra. The list includes elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig and different kinds of deer, of which the principal varieties are sambar (*cervus unicolor*), barasingha (*cervus duvauceli*), hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), and barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*).

Elephants may not be shot and are usually hunted on the system known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts mounted on staunch and well-trained elephants pursue the herd, which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an overhanging tree. After a time the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants one on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called; and, as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp, where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed. In the days

of native rule the capture of wild elephants was a prerogative of the crown. The Hathighar which connects the Ladoigarh with the hills is said to have been constructed for this purpose, and tradition has it that on one occasion a thousand animals were taken in this gigantic knedda. The system of *mela shikar* was introduced in the time of Purandar Singh, who levied a royalty of Rs. 10 on every animal captured. Prior to this private individuals were not allowed to hunt at all.*

Elephant hunting was last carried on on an extensive scale in 1903-04, when 82 animals were captured. The district is divided into eight mahals and the right to hunt elephants in each mahal is put up to action; a royalty of Rs.100 is also paid on each beast caught. Rhinoceros live in the swamps near Kajiranga and are now becoming scarce. They breed slowly, and as the horn is worth more than its weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. Herds of wild buffalo are found in the same locality, and wild bulls occasionally serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese on the Brahmaputra *churs*. Bison are generally found in the Mikir Hills, and, in the cold weather, sometimes descend to the jungles at their feet.

Steps have recently been taken to form the wide expanse of jungle near Kajiranga, which covers a total area of about 90 square miles, into a game reserve.† Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but, in 1904, are said to have accounted for nearly one thousand head

* Vide Deputy Commissioner's letter No. 70, dated August 23rd, 1852.

† About half of this reserve is situated in the Nowgong district.

of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year by different animals was as follows :—elephant, 4 ; tigers, 1 ; wild buffaloes, 1, snakes, 4 ; total, 10. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 12 tigers, 15 leopards, and 13 bears.

Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, jungle fowl, black and marsh partridge, pheasants and hares.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Early history—The Kachari kingdom—The Chutiyas—Their downfall—The advent of the Ahoms—Steady growth of their power—Koch and Muhammadan invasions—Budra Singh in 1700 A. D. rules the whole of Assam Proper—The Moamaria insurrection—Invasion of Assam by the Burmese—Occupation of Assam by the British—The manners and customs of the Ahoms—The Paik system—The fighting qualities of the Ahoms—Arbitrary form of Government—Social life—Attitude towards Hinduism—The position of women—Condition of the country in 1824—Restoration of Upper Assam to Purandar Singh and the resumption of his territories in 1838—Plots in 1857—Peaceful progress under British rule—Affairs on the Naga frontier—Archæological remains—Chronological table.

Early history.

It is possible that Sibsagar formed part of the old kingdom of Kamarupa, and that Bhagadatta enlisted levies in Upper Assam before he sailed with his troops down the Brahmaputra, only to fall on the field of Kurukshetra. It is possible that the district was at one time governed by Aryan rulers from the west; but, if this is so, there are practically no records of the period of their occupation; and it is with Bodos and Shans that the history of Sibsagar is concerned, and not with the legendary princes of Hindu mythology. In comparison with Kamrup, which can point to a masonry causeway constructed, so the story goes and so the people genuinely believe, by a king who lived and died before the great

war of the Mahabharata, the history of Sibsagar is but a thing of yesterday. But what it lacks in antiquity it makes up in accuracy and detail, for here we are dealing with a people endowed with the historical sense, a people who compiled the annals of their nobles and their kings, and whose records have most fortunately come down to us.

When the curtain lifts, and it does not lift, as in the rest of the Assam Valley, only to fall again before it rises for the drama of modern history, we find a large part of the district under the dominion of the Kachari king of Dimapur. These Kacharis belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found not only in the valley of the Brahmaputra but in the Garo Hills and in Hill Tippera far away to the south. They are thought to be a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original headquarters are said to have been located in the inaccessible hills and valleys which conceal the sources of the Yang-tse-kiang and Ho-ang-ho, and they seem to have gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now known as the Province of Assam. At the present day, a prayer is still in use in North Cachar which refers to a huge pipul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled till they reached Nilachal, the hill in Kamrup on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. This account of the migration of the Kacharis is to some extent confirmed by Hindu tradition,

The Kachari
kingdom.
Origin of
tribe.

which describes the line of Narak as being overthrown by foreign invaders, and as being afterwards restored in the person of one of his descendants, Brahmapala.

**Difference
between
Kacharis of
Darrang and
of Dimapur.**

At the time when they moved eastward from Gauhati the tribe seems to have split up into different sections, and there is nothing to suggest that the Kacharis living on the north bank of the Brahmaputra continued to be subject to the king of Dimapur. Originally, no doubt Rabhas, Meches, Garos, Lalungs, Bodo or north bank Kacharis, and Dimasa or the Kacharis of Cachar were all members of the same stock ; but they have gradually grown away from one another, and Bodo and Dimasa are now as dissimilar as French and Spanish. Even in the same district the two sections of the tribe are said to be distinct. The Kacharis in the north of Nowgong are Bodos, and are closely connected with the Kacharis of Darrang ; but they have nothing to do with the Hojais, who are Dimasa and live near the North Cachar and Jaintia Hills. At the time of the Ahom invasion in 1228 A. D. the Kacharis seem to have been a powerful tribe occupying the valleys of the Kapili and the Dhan-siri. The ruins of their capital at Dimapur, which are described at length at the conclusion of this chapter, show that they had advanced a considerable distance on the path of civilization. At the present day this place is buried in dense jungle, and the tract of country between the Mikir Hills and the Assam Range is a howling wilderness almost destitute of inhabitants ; but the remains of tanks and temples found in the Kapili valley

suggest that at one time there must have been fields and houses where there is now nothing but waving reeds and whispering grass.

The history of the Kacharis in Sibsagar is but vague and fragmentary, as, unlike the Ahoms, they have left no annals of their rule. They are said to have engaged in war with Jangal Balahu, a Raja whose fort was situated near Raha in Nowgong; but even the date at which this prince was reigning is uncertain, and we do not reach the solid base of fact till we find them in collision with the Ahoms. The first war broke out in 1490 A. D., when the Ahom king Suhangpha was defeated and driven across the Dikho. The scene of the battle is in itself significant, as it shows that the Kacharis could fight, and fight successfully, at a considerable distance from their capital, and that they could make their influence felt not only in the Mikir Hills and the forests of the Dhansiri but in the fertile plains of Jorhat and Golaghat. But it was not for long that they were to enjoy the pleasant sense of victory. War soon broke out again, and in 1536 A. D. Suhunmung, who was generally known as the Dihingia Raja, advanced up the valley of the Dhansiri, killed the Kachari Raja, Detsung, and sacked his capital, Dimapur. The headquarters of the kingdom were then removed to Maibang in the North Cachar Hills, and from there again to Khaspur in the plains to the south of the Barail, but the subsequent history of the tribe forms part of the history of Cachar and has little or no connection with Sibsagar.

War between
Kachari
kings of
Dimapur and
Ahoms in
15th and 16th
centuries.

The Chutiyas.

It now remains to consider what is known of the history of the Chutiyas, the other section of the Bodo tribe who, at the time of the advent of the Ahoms, shared with the Kacharis the sovereignty of the Sibsagar district. The early history of a semi-savage tribe is naturally veiled in some obscurity, but there seems little doubt that the Chutiyas were members of the great Bodo race, and entered the plains from the north-east. Colonel Dalton, quoting from an ancient chronicle, which is confirmed by local tradition, states that they were originally settled in the hills near the Subansiri river. The tribe lived in large independent villages like the Abors and Miris of the present day. In course of time one Bibar seems to have attained a certain measure of supremacy over the neighbouring villages, and the process begun by the father was carried on still further by the son. He extended his influence over the wild tribes, assumed the title of Lord of the Hills, and, at the head of his followers, descended into the valley of the Brahmaputra. He there defeated a king called Bhadra Sen and founded a capital called Ratnapur, which is said to have been situated in the Majuli or in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. Gaur was at that time still under the rule of a Hindu dynasty, so the eruption of the Chutiyas must have taken place prior to its conquest by the Muhammadans in 1204 A. D. The Chutiya leader assumed the name of Ratnadwaj Pal, contracted an alliance with a neighbouring Raja called Naipal, and generally consolidated his power. He excavated tanks, built temples, and constructed a line of forts along the frontier. He

then asked the king of Kamateswar* to bestow a daughter in marriage upon his son, and on that prince rejecting the proposed alliance with scorn, constructed a road to his territories protected by forts erected at intervals along the line of march, and so alarmed the Kamateswar Raja that his daughter was handed over without delay. Ratnadwaj visited the king of Gaur, and left a son to be educated at his court. The boy died and his body was despatched to his father, who received it when he was building a new city, called in memory of this event Sadiya (the place where the corpse was given).

Ratnadwaj was succeeded by five kings, each of whom bore the name of Pal. The last of the series, Karmadwaj, had one daughter for whose hand there were so many suitors that the king, with a Jephthah like fatuity, decided to submit the selection of his son-in-law to the arbitrament of fate. A flying squirrel was seen hovering over Sadiya, and the hand of the princess was promised to the man who could bring it down with an arrow. A poor young Chutiya was successful, and much to her disgust, the proud princess was united to her lowly spouse. The old king then resigned in favour of his son-in-law, who assumed the name of Nitipal.† Naturally enough he was utterly unfitted for the high position to which he had so

Downfall of
Chutiyas.

* Presumably Kamatapur in Kuch Bihar, which is said to have been founded by Niladwaj, whose grandson Nilambar was conquered by the Muhamadans at the end of the fifteenth century. This date would be too late for the invasion of the Chutiyas, and the expedition against Kamatapur is probably quite mythical.

† According to another version the king left an infant son, for whom Nitipal acted as regent.

suddenly and undeservedly been raised, and the kingdom was soon reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion. The Ahoms seized this opportunity to push home their attacks, and the power of the Chutiyas was broken once for all. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these legends. The story of the poor Chutiya boy who marries the princess is probably a poetical description of the descent of the tribe into the valley, and of the subjugation of the Hindu dynasty reigning in Lakhimpur. The date of the downfall of the Chutiya Kingdom, according to the Chutiya Buranji, is, moreover, 150 years later than that assigned to this event in the Ahom chronicles, which state that it took place in 1523 A. D.*

**The Ahom
account of
the Chutiyas.**

The Ahom historians say that when they entered Assam in 1228 A. D., the Chutiyas were established at Sadiya, and were masters of the country as far west as the Disang river. Hostilities broke out between the two powers towards the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1376 A. D. the Chutiyas declared that they were ready to make peace, invited the Ahom king to a regatta on the Saffrai river, and put him to death as soon as they had got him into their power. The two tribes continued to live in a state of intermittent conflict, but at the beginning of the sixteenth century the struggle began to assume an acute form. The Chutiyas at first met with a considerable measure of success. They pitched their camp at Dikhomukh, raided the territory of the Ahoms, and were,

* Mr. H. J. Kellner in a manuscript note in the Nowgong office says that it must have occurred before 1503 A. D. The general who conquered the Chutiyas was Phuchunmung Bor-gohain, who was killed in a great battle between the Ahoms and Kacharis at Kaliabar in 1503.

at any rate, not worsted in the engagements that ensued. Another account represents the Chutiyas as extremely stupid. They mistook scarecrows sent down the river on rafts for the enemy, and, when preparing a night attack by water, they were so drunk that they forgot to unmoor their boats. On waking the next morning they were so puzzled to find themselves still in the same place that they at once retreated without attempting to engage the enemy.

In 1523, the Chutiya king began to treat for peace, but declined to accept the Ahom terms, which involved the surrender of ancestral heirlooms in the shape of a gold umbrella and bracelets. The attack was accordingly resumed, and the Chutiya king retreated with his army to the hill Chantan or Chandangiri. The Ahoms in their pursuit experienced the difficulties which at the present day confront our own troops in their trans-frontier expeditions. The soldiers at first retreated, but they were rallied by their officers; and, in the engagements that ensued, the Chutiya king and his son were killed. Their heads were conveyed to the Ahom prince Suhunmung, more generally known as the Dihingia Raja, and placed by him at the foot of the stairs leading to the house of god at Charaideo. The administration of Sadiya was then entrusted to an Ahom noble, and the leading Chutiya families deported to places lower down the valley. But the tribe again rebelled, it was only with difficulty that this fresh revolt was stamped out, and as late as 1572 A. D. an expedition was sent against an insubordinate Chutiya chief.

**The Ahoms
enter Assam
in 1228 A. D.**

Having disposed of the Chutiyas and Kacharis, it is time to turn to the history of the Ahoms, the fierce and warlike tribe of Shans, who, starting from the smallest of beginnings, gradually subjugated the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra as far as the Manas.*

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, there was a dispute with regard to the succession to the kingdom of Mungmau or Pong in the upper portion of the Irawadi Valley. The unsuccessful claimant to the throne left the capital with his friends and followers, and, after wandering about for some years, crossed the Patkai, and, in 1228 A. D., settled down at the foot of the Naga Hills, in the country which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

When Sukapha, the first Ahom king, arrived in 1228 A. D. he found the Chutiyas ruling in the north with an outpost at Safrai, and the Kacharis in the south with an outpost at Kendaguri, the river Dillih forming the boundary between the two. In the narrow strip of territory near the hills there were a few families of Borahis and Morans, evidently of Bodo origin, whom the Ahom chief absorbed into his clan in the rough and ready manner of that day. The men were invited to a feast and killed, the women taken to wife, and the little colony settled down undisturbed in this no man's land to gradually increase in strength and numbers.

**Steady
growth of
Ahom power.**

The struggles between the Ahoms and the Chutiyas and Kacharis have already been described, but, apart

* The description of the manners and customs of the Ahoms, and much of the history has been taken from old Ahom buranjis, translations of which will be found in the office of the Superintendent of Ethnography.

from this gradual movement of expansion towards the east and west, the early history of the Ahom dynasty contains few incidents likely to attract the attention of the historian. A list of the successive Ahom kings will be found in the chronological table appended to this summary, but many of them are names and nothing more, and of their reigns little or nothing of interest is known. On the whole it seems to have been a cruel and treacherous time ; and in this respect the Ahoms were no better than their neighbours. It is true that the Ahom king was murdered by his hosts at a regatta to which he had been invited by the Chutiyas ; but a similar ruse was employed by the Ahoms against the Tipumias. When they suspected this people of an inclination to rebel, they asked them to a feast, and then put them all to death. Though they sinned against the laws of hospitality, they were evidently unconscious of the heinous character of the offence, and the skulls of their victims were hung up on the Tipam stone to commemorate this grisly banquet.* Arbitrary and tyrannical conduct by the Raja was checked or, rather, ended by the principal ministers of state ; and more than one king who failed to give satisfaction to his duly constituted advisers, met with a sudden end from the knife or spear of the hired bravo.

The first Ahom king to step forth from the position of The petty local prince into that of a ruler who had dealings with the outside world was Suhunmung, or the Dihingia Raja, 1497-1539.

* Amongst the tribes on the North-East Frontier there is no reverence for the salt. In Manipur, in 1891, some Kukis asked some Nagas with whom they had had a dispute to a reconciliation banquet and then murdered them.

Raja, who came to the throne at the end of the fifteenth century. His victories over the Chutiyas and Kacharis have already been described, but he was no less successful in his dealings with the Musalmans and Koches.

The former sent two expeditions up the Brahmaputra Valley, but neither met with much success, and the leader of the second, a Pathan named Turbuk, was killed with most of his followers on the banks of the Bhareli in 1532 A.D. The survivors were made prisoners, and are said to have been the ancestors of the Morias, a degraded caste of Muhammadans who earn their living as braziers in Assam at the present day. It was in this war that the Ahoms are said to have first employed firearms. The Bhareli seems at this time to have been the western boundary of the Ahom kingdom, north of the Brahmaputra. It is recorded that, in 1529 A.D., the king took up his quarters at Bishnath, and ordered his generals to plunder the territory lying west of the Bhareli. Suhunmung, like so many of the Ahom kings, met his end at the hands of an assassin, and was succeeded by Sukhenmung, who is said to have founded a capital at Gargaon near the modern Nazira.

Sukampha,
1552-1611,
conquered by
Nar Narayan.
His
successor
helps Koches
against
Muhamma-
dans.

His successor Sukampha enjoyed the throne for nearly sixty years, but he was unable to withstand the victorious armies of the Koch king, Nar Narayan, who occupied Gargaon and extorted tribute from the Ahom Raja. The triumph of the Koches was, however, but shortlived, and about 1614 A.D. Bali Narayan, the grandson of Silarai, Nar Narayan's brother, was compelled to apply to the next Ahom king, Suchengpha or Pratap Singh, for help

against the Muhammadans. The war dragged on in Lower Assam with varying success, but in 1637 the Nawab of Dacca sent up an overwhelming force, which carried all before it. The Ahoms were driven out of Kamrup, and a treaty was made under which the Bar-nadi was accepted as the frontier between Muhammadan and Ahom territory.

Suchengpha enjoyed a long and prosperous reign, but his two successors were unfitted for the greatness they were born to, and were soon deposed. In 1654, Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh came to the throne. Taking advantage of the confusion that ensued when Shah Jahan was deposed by his rebellious sons, he drove the Musalmans out of Kamrup and Goalpara, and for a short time the Ahoms were in possession of the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra down to the point at which the river turns south to enter the fertile plains of Bengal. Mir Jumla, the Nawab of Dacca, was not, however, the man to brook such aggressions on the territory of the Mughal Empire, and in 1662 he started with a large force for the conquest of Assam.*

No resistance was offered to the Muhammadans during the initial stages of their march, and they occupied the forts at Jogighopa, Srighat, and Pandu near Gauhati, Gauhati itself, and Kajali on the western frontier of Nowgong, without striking a blow. At Simlagarh, which seems to have been in the neighbourhood of Kaliabar, there was a strongly fortified post, upon which even the

* An interesting account by Professor Blochmann of the invasion of Mir Jumla and of the preceding wars between the Muhammadans and Koches will be found in J. A. S. B., Vol. XLI., Pt. I, No. 1, 1872.

big guns of the Muhammadans made but little impression, but the garrison displayed extraordinary cowardice, and the place was captured without difficulty. The Ahoms then attempted to destroy the huge flotilla of boats which accompanied the invading host, but fortune still declined to smile upon them, and they met with no better success than when engaging the enemy by land. Half of their fleet, which is said to have consisted of seven or eight hundred vessels, each armed with a gun, was lost, and the rest were put to flight. If the Musalman historians are to be believed, the river must at that time have been covered with native craft, as the registrar at Gauhati reported that no less than 32,000 boats had visited that town, more than one-half of which it is said belonged to the Assamese.

**Occupation
of Gargaon.**

No further opposition was offered to the advancing host, and on March 17th, 1662, the Nawab entered Gargaon. The Raja and his army had evacuated the town and retreated to Namrup in the south-east. The general placed his headquarters at Mathurapur, a place about seven miles south-east of Gargaon, and established thanas in different parts of the Sibsagar district. But when the rains began to break these isolated posts were exposed to attacks from the Assamese, and had to be drawn in, and the position of the Imperialists was such as to cause dissatisfaction to the men and the gravest anxiety to their generals. They were unable to move about the country, and any stragglers who ventured outside the camp were promptly shot. They were exposed to perpetual night attacks, there was heavy mortality

from fever, and, apart from rice, there was very little food. Salt was sold in the camp for Rs.30 a seer, butter for Rs.14 a seer, and opium fetched as much as a gold mohur per tola. The health of the troops at Mathura-pur became so bad that it was found necessary to move them to Gargaon. It proved to be impossible to retire even this short distance in good order, and the Muhammadans were compelled to abandon their sick and to leave many of their guns sticking in the mud. At the conclusion of the rains the Musalmans began once more to take the offensive, but Mir Jumla's health had become so bad that he was unable to pursue the campaign with any degree of vigour, and a peace was patched up in January 1663. According to the Muhammadan historians, the Ahom Raja agreed to pay a heavy indemnity, and the country north of the Brahmaputra and west of the Bhareli, with Beltala, Damuria, and the Naga Hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, were ceded to the Mughal Emperor. It is, however, doubtful whether these terms were ever carried out. This, at any rate, is certain that only a few years later the Ahoms were once more in possession of Kamrup, and the outposts of the Muhammadans were located not on the Bhareli but at Rangamati in the Goalpara district.

The description of Assam in the latter half of the seventeenth century as given by the Muhammadan invaders is full of interest. The road from Kaliabar to Gargaon is said to have passed through well cultivated land, and on every side there were houses, gardens, and orchards. This description hardly holds good of

Assam as
described
by the
historian of
Mir Jumla's
invasion.

the road from Kaliabar to Bokaghat at the present day, but the remains of roads and plinths north of Kajiranga show that what is now a howling jungle inhabited by buffaloes and rhinoceros, must in former days have been the site of prosperous villages.

It is also said that the north bank was better cultivated than the south, a statement that still holds good as far as Goalpara and Kamrup, with which the writer was no doubt most intimately acquainted, are concerned. Rich and poor alike built their houses of wood, bamboo, and thatch, and the people generally seem to have led a simple vigorous life.

**Description
of Gargaon.**

The following description of Gargaon is of sufficient interest to warrant reproduction:—

“The town has four gates built of stone and mortar, the distance of each of which from the palace of the Raja is three *kos*. A high and wide *Al*, very strong, has been made for the traffic; and round about the town, instead of fortifications, there are circular bushes of bamboos, about two *kos* in diameter. But the town is not like other towns, the huts of the inhabitants being within the bamboo bushes near the *Al*. Each man has his garden or field before his house, so that one side of the field touches the *Al*, and the other the house. Near the Raja's palace, on both sides of the Dikho river, are large houses. The bazar road is narrow, and is only occupied by *pan*-sellers. Eatables are not sold as in our markets; but each man keeps in his house stores for a year, and no one either sells or buys. The town looks large, being a cluster of several villages.”

**Products of
country.**

Rice was the staple food, but salt was scarce and dear. Salt of an inferior quality was obtained from the salt wells in the coal measures, but the bulk of the people used the *khar puni* that is so commonly distilled from the ashes of the plantain at the present day. Mangoes were plentiful but full of worms, and sugarcane of three

varieties, black, white, and red, did well. Elephants were evidently a source of wealth, but asses, camels, and horses were rare.

The Raja's palace is described in the most glowing terms, and one cannot help suspecting that the writer was inclined to magnify the wonders he had seen.— **Ra a's palace.**

"The ornaments and curiosities, with which the whole wood-work of the house is filled, defy all description: nowhere in the whole inhabited world will you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation, and pictures. The sides of this palace are embellished by extraordinary wooden trellice work. Inside there are large brass mirrors highly polished, and if the sun shines on one of them, the eyes of the by-standers are perfectly dazzled. Twelve thousand workmen are said to have erected the building in the course of one year. At one end of the hall, rings are fastened on four pillars opposite to each other, each pillar having nine rings. When the Raja takes his seat in the hall, they put a dais in the middle of these four pillars, and nine canopies of various stuffs are fastened above it to the rings. The Raja then sits on the dais below the canopies."

Jaiyadwaj Singh did not long survive his expulsion from his capital, and, in 1663, he was succeeded by Chakradwaj Singh. During the reign of this prince the Ahoms re-occupied Gauhati, and there was a serious famine, an occurrence which is most unusual in Assam. According to the old chronicler there was no water in the fields, no field was tilled, and no water could be got except by drawing it from deep wells with ropes. On the death of Chakradwaj, a short period intervened in which the nobles proved too strong for the crown, and between 1670 and 1681 no less than seven princes were placed upon the throne, only to come to a bloody and untimely end. The Muhammadans took advantage of these disturbances to regain possession **Gad har Singh restores order, after anarchy between 1670 and 1681.**

of Gauhati, but they were driven out by Gadadhar Singh, who came to the throne in 1681, and restored to it the prestige which it had formerly enjoyed. Not content with consolidating his power in the plains he despatched expeditions against the Mishmis and the Nagas. By this rigorous policy he reduced to order the hill tribes, who have, whenever the central government was weak, been a source of great annoyance to the dwellers in the valley.

**Rudra
Singh,
1695-1714.**

The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of Rudra Singh. He founded a new capital at Rangpur, which was built for him by one Ghonsyam, a Bengali, who also constructed a bridge across the Namdang. He despatched two large armies against the Rajas of Cachar and Jaintiapur, one of which marched through the North Cachar and the other through the Jaintia Hills, and brought both of those princes captive to Assam. The Miris and Daflas were enlisted as soldiers in the royal army, and, at this time, the Ahoms seem to have dominated not only the whole of the valley of the Brahmaputra but the outer hills as well. Rudra Singh died at Gauhati in 1714, and the Rudreswar temple was erected there by his son in memory of that sad event.

**Sib Singh
1714-1744.**

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as the excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands. The Daflas seem to have given trouble, and in 1717 the Daflagarh was constructed to keep these mischiev-

ous tribes in check ; but, generally speaking, this long reign was singularly devoid of interest. It is, however, worthy of note that even as long ago as the first half of the seventeenth century, four Europeans are said to have visited Rangpur.

The reign of the next prince, Pramatta Singh, was short and uneventful, and during the incumbency of his successor, Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles to whom the command was entrusted excused themselves on various grounds, and declined the proffered honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and, though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

**Pramatta
Singh,
1744-1751.
Rajeswar
Singh,
1751-1769.**

The alliance between the Ahoms and the Manipuris was, however, cemented by the bestowal of a Manipuri princess, whom Rajeswar Singh elevated to the rank of principal queen.

In 1759, the peaceful tribe of Mikirs are said to have raided on the plains, but little difficulty was experienced in putting down this rising. The Rajas of Cachar and Jaintiapur also made demonstrations on the southern frontier, but, on troops being despatched to Raha, they came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valour. Another expedition was despatched

against the Daflas, and the Raja of Khyriem formally tendered his submission and promised to pay a yearly tribute of iron. In 1757, Jorhat was honoured by a visit from the Raja, and he had a temporary residence erected there ; but this town did not become the capital of the Ahom kings till they had been driven from Rangpur by the Moamaria rebels.

**Lakshmi
Singh,
1760-1790.
The Moa-
maria insur-
rection.**

The reign of his successor, Lakshmi Singh, was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borbarua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom chroniclers, and it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamaras named Nahor Khora and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain.

The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagin Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamaras, had forcibly taken her to wife, and as he was bending down at the *bihu* to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age nor sex.* The house of the Moamaria mahunt was

Success and
subsequent
defeat of
Moamaras.

* The Moamaras say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is no doubt an oriental exaggeration.

surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamaras were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

**Gaurinath
Singh,
1780-1795.**

**Moamaras
again
victorious.**

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorising any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamaras with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees, forsaking their wives and children." The highest Hindus castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his

terror even left his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur, but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler:—"The Matakas harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Daffa Hills, and others in the fort of the Bura Gohain, who was fighting with the Matakas for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years, and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792 a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was re-taken. Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai, was subdued, and in March 1794 Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his enemies in check by the help of sepoys trained on the English system.

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died, and was succeeded by Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great disorder. The Daffas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed

**Kamaleswar
Singh.
1795-1800.**

with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush,* a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but, when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandu-ghat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoy in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

**Final col-
lapse of the
Ahom king-
dom.**

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Bura Gohain or prime minister and fled to Calcutta and thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and reinstated the Bor Phukan, but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed, and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned with a large force and replaced him on the throne.

They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820 Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his

* This Mr. Raush was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkandazes to Gaurinath's assistance, but they wore out up to a man. A mass of masonry, the size of a small cottage, covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Women who fell into their hands were violated with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra, which occupied Rangpur in January 1825, and compelled the Burmese to retire to their own territories, while in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.

**Ahom Administration.
The paik system.**

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up into groups of three or four called *gots*, each individual being styled a *powa paik*. Over every twenty *gots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *baras* a *saikia*, and over every ten *saikias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *got* was always employed on duty with the state, and while so engaged, was

supported by the other members. The Raja and his ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments, which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs, constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into disrepair. The duty of providing the various articles required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indica-

tion of the reluctance with which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

But though the common people seem to have been ^{War.} compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gaddi*. Their guides, however, failed them, they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The Jaintia Raja is himself ready to accept the Ahom king as his suzerain, but cannot impose his

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, *i. e.*, labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the Assamese would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

will upon the independent hillmen, who owe him but a nominal allegiance, and who decline to surrender their freedom at the bidding of their king. The Kachari prince sends tribute, but only "a string of pearls, a dugdagi (locket) and a horse;" assuredly a very small return on the quantity of human life and treasure expended. It must at the same time be admitted that the loot obtained on this occasion was not inconsiderable. It included three large cannon, 2,373 large and small guns, 12,000 pieces of silver, 143 gold embroidered coats, 63 elephants and 11 Turkey horses, besides other things; and, more valuable perhaps than all, over 2,000 human beings. At the conclusion of this dangerous and troublesome expedition, each *paik* received a gratuity of four annas, *batta* which would hardly satisfy the sepoy of to-day. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moamarias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

**Muhamma-
dans des-
cribe Ahoms
as brave
soldiers.**

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume XL1, Part, 1, pages 49—100.

number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors ; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A. D. the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, bloodthirsty, and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'élite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty of tenure, under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was the position of the king, and, in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions ; and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, states that the administration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were

Uncertainty
and arbitrary
character
of Govern-
ment.

conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that "blood may not be shed."

**Instances
of this.**

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh, 1611—1649 A. D. A Katak, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Katak reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The king enquired of the Katak responsible for watching the movements of the enemy whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Katak was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern; a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at

such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented, and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to revisit his former home would suffer the penalty of death with all his family "even to the child in the womb." Five hundred men attempted to return, as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshimi Singh (1769—1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the times. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior, the Borborua. A complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles, and his brother were rolling

Savage punishments: an official blinded for not dismounting before his official superior.

in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century it was no uncommon thing to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more than one case is quoted in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment too was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

**Social life
amongst the
Ahoms.**

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals, which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang, Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar.

They were fond of fishing and shooting, and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction than the one at Auniati; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook, or to the greater beauty of the *sattr* precincts.

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611—1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans,

Attitude of
Ahoms to-
wards Hin-
duism.
Savage
persecution
of Vaish-
naviam.

ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who in 1692 plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shown even to the sacred head of the Auniati *saltra*, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhat. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakhinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off, while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and fowls, cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of this unholy food.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniati gosain; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

The leading
gosains per-
secuted by
Moamaras.

During the Moamaria insurrection the religious orders again fell upon evil times. The rebel king confined the persons of the four principal gosains, and extorted Rs. 8,000 each from Auniati and Dakhinpat, and Rs. 4,000 each from Garamur and Kamalabari. Religion was degraded by the promulgation of an order that any person could be initiated on payment of a betel-nut, and the common people availed themselves in crowds of this

indulgence. Subsequently in the reign of Gaurinath Singh, the Moamarias attacked the Garamur *sattr*, burned it to the ground, slew a large number of the disciples, and nearly killed the gosain himself. His successor Kamaleswar Singh (1795—1809) found himself unable to pay the sepoy, whose services were indispensable for the maintenance of some sort of order in the kingdom. Following the example of other monarchs, he called upon the church to supply the funds for the support of the temporal power. Contributions were levied on all the mahunts, and the demands of the soldiers were satisfied.

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms **Laxity of Ahom Hinduism.** found the restrictions of their new religion irksome; and their gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral; while not only buffaloes but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this, clearly shows that even towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests

the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs; a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moa-maria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman; while at the beginning of the 19th century the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress, a breach of the convenances for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

**The position
of women.**

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight, that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their womenfolk in honour, and even at the present day the purdah, and all that it implies, is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the 17th century, two of the queens almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714—1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his

queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed ; and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his stepmother the control of the Khangia mel, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels ; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Buragohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shown her and she fell, pierced with spears ; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

In estimating the effects of British rule, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The native system of government had completely broken down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any lust for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese,

Condition of
Province at
time of
cession to
the British.

the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment meted out to the unfortunate villagers, can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouths of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

Native testimony on this point.

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman, Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills: "Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in

the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the Province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese, whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure, been fulfilled; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

Reference has been already made to the hesitation with which the East India Company undertook the administration of Assam. In 1833, the experiment was tried of placing the portion of the valley lying between the Dhansiri and the Dihing south of the Brahmaputra, and between Bishnath and Sadiya on the north bank, under Raja Purandar Singh. The Raja was accorded the position of a protected prince, was entrusted with full

**Purandar
Singh's terri-
tory.**

civil powers, and was required to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 to Government. It was thought that this arrangement would prove acceptable to the Assamese, but experience showed that this was not the case. In 1838, Captain Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, travelled through the Raja's territories, and was met on every side by complaints and charges against his administration. North of the Brahmanputra the country was left unprotected, and the people were harried by the Daflas, who carried off their women and children and held them to ransom. Small guards of sepoys were occasionally sent to protect the frontier, but, as the villagers were expected to provide them with all that they required, their presence and absence alike were felt to be a grievance. The distasteful system of compulsory labour was still maintained, duties of as much as one anna in the rupee were levied on everything except rice sold in the markets, and the people who remained were required to pay the poll tax of others who had died or had migrated to the territory directly under our administration.

There can be little doubt that Purandar Singh's administration was unpopular with every section of the community, but it is difficult to resist the conclusion that it was never really given a fair chance. Major White estimated that the revenue of his territories amounted to about Rs. 80,000.* Of this no less than half a lakh was ear-

* Letter No. 80, dated 6th July 1838, from Captain Jenkins. A letter from Purandar Singh's son states that when his father accepted the Raj he had no idea what a large proportion Rs. 50,000 bore to the total revenues of the country. Colonel Cooper, he says, had made a settlement for Rs. 1,70,000, but neither he nor any of the British officers who succeeded him could collect more than Rs. 70,000 or Rs. 80,000.

marked as tribute, and the Raja was left with a nominal Rs. 30,000 per annum from which to defray the expenses of his court, to satisfy the demands of the priests, and to carry on the business of the administration. It is hardly matter for surprise that little was spent on public works, that the army was small and inefficient, and that it was impossible to remit taxation. The natural tendency of mankind to cavil at the government seems to have been overlooked, and too much importance was attached to every murmur of complaint. The Muhammadan settlers in the country professed that they had serious grievances, yet Captain Jenkins was himself constrained to admit that those who came to see him were far better dressed than he expected, and that, judging by externals, many of them were well off. There can, however, be little doubt that the resumption of this territory in 1838 was an act which met with hearty approval from the great majority of the persons affected.

The history of the district since it came under British rule has been one of peaceful development. The great tea industry has had a wonderfully stimulating effect, and the progress of the people has not been retarded by the terrible outbreaks of malarial fever which decimated the population of Lower and Central Assam. The only other points that call for notice are the conduct of the local notables during the trying times of 1857, and the behaviour of the Naga tribes beyond our frontier.

At the time of the Mutiny the resumption of Sibsagar was a matter of comparatively recent date, and it was only natural that the family of the Raja and the upper

Peaceful
progress
under Bri-
tish rule.

Plots in 1857

classes and hangers-on of the former court should think regretfully of the times of Purandar Singh. Mr. Moffatt Mills, in 1853, admitted that they had been ruined by the emancipation of their slaves, and that this measure had reduced many families of respectability to indigence; and it was not to be expected that such people would be enthusiastic supporters of the Company. The miseries of the Burmese invasion were not yet forgotten, and they had no desire for actual independence; but they had every reason to deplore the abolition of the privileges of their caste, which they hoped to be able to restore in a protected native state. Even in 1853, the young Raja, Kandarpeswar Singh, urged on Mr. Mills his right to hold Upper Assam as an independent tributary; and it was only natural that, when four years later the flame of revolt spread over Hindustan, the more daring of his adherents should have planned to seize by force what had been denied to their more peaceful supplications.

**Moni Ram,
Dewan, chief
instigator
of the plot.**

The prime mover in the matter was Moni Ram, Dewan, who, in the time of Purandar Singh, was one of the most important persons in the district. On its resumption by the Company he lost his most valuable offices and emoluments, and resigned those that were left to him, to take service as Dewan of the Assam Company. He no longer found it an easy matter to support his household, which he informed Mr. Mills numbered no less than 185 persons, and he had every motive to induce him to promote the restoration of the old order, and sufficient hardihood and independence to attempt to give effect to his desires.

From Calcutta he wrote to the Saring Raja, Kandarpeswar Singh, informing him that Hindustan had been conquered by the sepoy, who were daily approaching nearer to the Presidency town, and advising him to take this opportunity of recovering the throne. Meetings were accordingly held at night at the Raja's house, and Duti Ram, the criminal sheristadar at Sibsagar, was approached, and lent his approval to the scheme. The subadar at Dibrugarh was also seduced from his allegiance, and promised to bring his men to support the Raja at Jorhat. A number of other influential men seem to have been gained over, and steps were taken to collect provisions for the soldiers.* The rising was to take place in the Durga Pujas, when, in the presence of Moni Ram Datta and other leading men amongst the Assamese, Kandarpeswar Singh was to be seated on the throne. This proposal did not, however, meet with general approval. The raiyats, when they learned of it, became alarmed, concealed their property, and prepared for flight; and some of the older men approached by the Raja not only declined to assist him in the furtherance of his plans but disclosed them to Harnath Parbottia Borua, the daroga of Jorhat.

The district officer, Captain Holroyd, seems to have been well informed of what was going on, and at the proper time the Raja was arrested and despatched to Alipur. At the conclusion of the enquiry he was released, but was required to live under surveillance in the neighbour-

Plot crushed
by Deputy
Commis-
sioner.

* Letter dated 28th June 1858, from Capt. Holroyd to Secretary to Government of Bengal.

hood of Calcutta, and was not allowed to return to his native country. Moni Ram was arrested at Calcutta, and sent up to Assam, where he was duly tried, sentenced, and hanged ; and the story of his death is often sung in the villages even at the present day. The sepoy at Dibrugarh seem to have been much affected by the mutiny of Koer Singh, from whose territory many of them came, and, for a time at any rate, succeeded in influencing the Assamese soldiers in the corps. This feeling of uneasiness was not noticed till September, when Colonel Hannay made carefully conducted enquiries with regard to the temper of his men, distributed the Hindustanis over the smaller and remoter outposts, from which they had no means of communicating with one another, and gradually concentrated the loyal nucleus of Nepalese at Dibrugarh.

The hands of the authorities were further strengthened by the despatch of two naval brigades, each consisting of 100 Europeans, who reached Assam in September 1857 and January 1858, and there was no overt outbreak to disturb the public peace.

**The Trans-
Dikho
Nagas.**

The hills east of the Dikho are inhabited by tribes of independent Nagas, but, even in the days of native rule, they were in political relations with the Ahom government. They have always derived considerable profit from their dealings with the plains, and they generally have sufficient sense to abstain from carrying their quarrels into British territory. In 1842, Captain Brodie, who was at that time in charge of the Sibsagar district, went for a tour amongst the Naga villages between the

Dikho and the Buri Dihing. He reported that in this tract there were the following ten clans :—

(1) The Namsangias with 8 villages; (2) the Bor-duarias with 8 villages; (3) the Paniduarias with 10 villages; (4) the Mutonias or Kulungs with 4 villages; (5) the Banferas with 4 villages; (6) the Jobokas with 4 villages; (7) the Changnois with 8 villages; (8) the Mooloongs with 5 villages; (9) the Jaktoongias with 8 villages; (10) the Tabloongias with 13 villages.

Captain Brodie persuaded the chiefs of these clans to abstain from outrages on British territory and to discourage inter-tribal feuds, and, so great are the advantages that they obtain from intercourse with the valley, that these sections of the Naga race have seldom been a source of serious trouble. In 1863, the outpost at Geleki was burnt down by a raiding party belonging, apparently, to some of the remoter Naga tribes. Government did not on this occasion close the duars to trade, but when in 1867 the post was again attacked, and several of the constables killed, the neighbouring tribes were promptly excluded from the plains. This measure resulted in the arrest of two of the principal offenders, who were found to be Zungia Abor Nagas, a clan whose villages were situated at a considerable distance from the valley.

In 1884-85, the Deputy Commissioner of the Naga Hills toured through the country lying on either side of the Dikho, and in the following year it was laid down that the hills west of that river should be under his management and not under the Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar. The most important tribes with which the

**The Dikho
laid down as
frontier of
Naga Hills.**

latter officer is concerned are the Banferas and the Jobokas. The two clans have for many years been on bad terms with one another, but, so long as they respect the sanctity of our frontier, they are allowed to settle their disputes as best they can. The Sibsagar Nagas are generally fairly quiet, but from time to time they carry their feuds across the border or cause annoyance by their petty thefts. In 1891, they seem to have been unsettled by the Manipur disturbances. They became more insolent in their manner, the people living near the frontier were alarmed, and a detachment of 100 sepoy was stationed for nearly two months at Sibsagar. Small parties of men were sent to Sonari and Bihubar, and some military police were quartered at Geleki, and public confidence was thus restored.

**Murders in
1902.**

In the following year there was an epidemic of outrages upon the frontier. In April, a party of Banfera Nagas sallied out to kill the Raja of Lakrang, a small village which had formerly been subject to Banfera but which had been annexed by the Joboka Nagas. The Raja made his escape, but one of his followers was murdered in some jungle on the Balijan grant near the Inner Line.* The Banfera Raja was called upon to deliver up the culprit, and, as he only handed over a wretched individual who was innocent of the crime, he was fined Rs. 500 by the order of the Chief Commissioner. Barely half this fine was, however, realized and the balance was remitted. In November of that year two Nagas of Jak-

* A line laid down as the limits of the effective jurisdiction of the Assam administration, without prejudice to our claims to territory beyond it.

tung were killed near the Santak grant by Failung Nagas, who mistook them for men from Khongan, a village with which they were at feud. The murderers were sent in and sentenced by the Sessions Judge to transportation for life, but were pardoned by the Chief Commissioner on condition that the Failung and Jaktung villages composed their differences. In March 1893, a Banfera Naga who had settled in the Abhaipur mauza was murdered by the Lakrang Raja. The murderer was arrested by the police and committed to the Court of Sessions.

In 1892 and the following years, complaints were received from the General Manager of the Assam Tea Company of petty thefts committed by Nagas on the Dholbagan and Charaideo gardens. In February 1895, these petty annoyances culminated in the destruction by fire of a godown at Charaideo and of stores valued at about Rs 4,000. The chiefs of all the villages using the Tiru path were ordered to deliver up the culprits, or in alternative to pay a fine of Rs. 50 per village, and, as they failed to comply with these demands, the path was closed and a guard of 14 military policemen posted there to enforce the order. Three years later the guard was withdrawn as its retention was no longer considered to be necessary.

In July 1900, the Joboka chief Vangping and three of his relations were murdered, and twenty-five of his relatives and friends fled to British territory to avoid sharing his fate. They reached the Tingalibam garden, and were followed there by parties of armed Nagas, who demanded their surrender. This was refused as the refugees declared that their lives would be in danger, and in the evening

The Tiru
path closed.

Nagas visit
Tingalibam
Garden in
1900 to
demand
surrender of
fugitives.

they were sent to the Sonari outpost for protection. The pursuing Nagas remained some time on the garden, but fortunately committed no overt acts of violence. A small fine was, however, imposed on them for coming armed into British territory.

**Archæological remains,
Tanks.**

The principal memorials of their rule left by the Ahoms in Sibsagar are the fine bunds, many of which are still used as roads, the temples, and the tanks. The total number of old tanks in the Sibsagar district is very large, but five stand out pre-eminent. The European station of Sibsagar has been built upon the banks of a tank of beautiful fresh water, which is about $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles in circumference, and is no less than 114 acres in area. About two miles south of Sibsagar is the Rudra Sagar tank, which has an area of 106 acres, and six miles west of Rudra Sagar is Gaurisagar (85 acres). These three tanks in themselves would satisfy the requirements of a dense population, but between Rudra Sagar and Gaurisagar there are two more great reservoirs, one north and one south of the road that runs to Gaurisagar. The northernmost is known as Athai Sagar and has an area of 103 acres, while immediately opposite is the Jay Sagar tank, area 118 acres. The fact that these great sheets of water are situated in such close proximity to one another is ample evidence that their designers were not actuated by any base utilitarian motives. These tanks are surrounded by moats from which earth was evidently taken for the embankment of the reservoir. The water level of the tank is thus higher than that of the encircling moat.

The temples are built of thin flat bricks baked till they **Temples.** have almost reached the consistency of earthenware. They are nearly all of them of one design, and consist of an egg-shaped dome enclosing the shrine approached by a short nave. The outer wall of the dome is often adorned with bas-reliefs. A list of the temples in the district will be found appended to the following chapter. The temples on the Sibsagar tank are naturally the best known.

The palace at Rangpur stands about a mile to the south of Sibsagar station. The following description is taken from the Report of the Archæological Survey, **The palace and Rang-ghar at Rangpur.** Bengal Circle, for the year 1902-03 :—

“ It is a building of irregular shape, consisting of a long flight of rooms running from east to west, with several smaller wings in its northern and southern side. The lower storey apparently served principally as stables, store-rooms, servants' quarters, etc., while the royal apartments were located in the upper storey, which has now disappeared for the greater part. In the central northern wing is an octagonal room, which is now called the *pujar ghor*. Close to it a portion of the royal apartments still exists. It has a stair leading up to the terrace, and the anteroom is covered by a vaulted roof. South of it stands an isolated room, believed to have been used by the queen during her confinement. Another isolated room in the south-western corner of the palace is believed to have been used as a kitchen. The area within which the palace stands is surrounded by a wall, which is approximately two miles in circumference. Another isolated building inside this area is said to have been used as a powder magazine. It is called Karghar.”

“The Rangghar stands outside the palace enclosure, to the west. It was the place from where the king used to watch buffalo-fights and other sports. Its erection is ascribed to Pramatta Sinha in the year 1744 A.D. It is the best preserved ruin of the ancient Ahom capital. Its shape is octagonal, but the northern and western sides are much longer than the other ones. Each of these

longer sides has three large and two small openings. The building has two storeys, each being divided internally into one large central room and two smaller ones at the eastern and western end. The position of the western chamber is occupied by the stairs leading to the upper storey, outside a gap is left in the staircase, sufficient to allow an elephant standing between it. A person mounted on an elephant thus could ascend the steps leading to the upper storey immediately from the back of his elephant, without dismounting first. The roof is crowned by three small turrets in its centre, and at its eastern and western end are the projecting heads of two small *makaras* or *jalbastis*."

Gargaon.

Of the ruins of Gargaon very little now remains. The palace was a three-storeyed building. The two lower storeys contained a single centre chamber with a verandah on each side, at each corner of which there was a small room. The top storey was nothing more than a cupola, the room being only five or six feet square. The building is at present in a very dilapidated state, but is possessed of some architectural merits.

Dimapur.

Some of the most interesting remains in the Sibsagar district are, however, in no way connected with the Ahoms. The old Kachari capital at Dimapur is situated in the midst of the huge Nambar forest, which stretches a pathless wilderness of trees for many miles on every side. Prior to the construction of the railway it was extremely inaccessible,* and the existence of the remains of what must evidently have been a considerable city in the middle of this howling jungle affords a striking instance of the rapidity with which nature in the East can obliterate the handiwork of man. The enclosure

* It was 55 miles by road from Golaghat, and almost the whole of the way the road ran through the densest and most malarious of forests.

wall of the capital at Dimapur is made of thin flat native bricks, and, according to Dr. Bloch, is about one and a half miles in circumference.* It is entered by a brick gateway which belongs to the Bengali style of Muhammadan architecture, and which was probably erected under the direction of some foreigner like Ghonsyam, the Bengali architect of the Ahom Rajas. Within there are several rows of curious pillars, some shaped like gigantic pawns and others in the form of a capital V. A little to the south of the gate there are four rows, two of pawns and two of V-shaped pillars, consisting alternately of 16 and 17 monoliths. They are massive pieces of sandstone, those in the centre being about 13 feet high and 14 feet in circumference, and are ornamented with rude carvings in low relief of flowers, geometrical figures, and animals. A little to the west of this group of pillars there is a single pawn, the largest yet discovered, which is $16\frac{1}{2}$ feet high and $23\frac{1}{2}$ feet in circumference. North of this pillar there is another double row of pawn pillars, while to the south are the remains of more pillars, all of which are lying shattered on the ground and half buried in the earth. Local tradition has it that these pillars were erected at the place where animals were sacrificed by the Raja, and tradition is to some extent confirmed by the customs of the Nagas at the present day. These hospitable hillmen keep a record of their feasts and erect a round topped post when they have killed a mithun and a V-shaped post when they have slain a cow ; and these curious monoliths may thus commemorate some

* Annual Report of the Archæological Surveyor, Bengal Circle, for 1902-03.

particularly gorgeous banquet of the Kachari king. On the top of the V-shaped pillars there are mortice holes, but it hardly seems probable that they can ever have supported the roof of any building. All traces of this building, if any such existed, have at any rate completely disappeared. That Dimapur was once the centre of a crowded population is shown by the existence of a large number of tanks in the immediate vicinity. It is said that there are altogether fifty-two, but most are buried in impenetrable jungle, and it is not easy to ascertain their actual number. Some of them are of considerable size, the tank on which the inspection bungalow is built measuring about 300 yards along the shorter sides.

Ruins at Kasomari Pathar.

In the forest near the Doiang, about one day's journey by boat from Jamaguri railway station, there are the remains of an old city. The earthen ramparts and moats are still visible, and seem to have extended for about half a mile each way. Within the ramparts are lines of pillars, and, in addition to the chessmen and V-shaped pillars of Dimapur, there are others of the shape of a sword or dagger. These ruins are described in the Report of the Archæological Survey, Bengal Circle, for the year 1904-05.

Miscellaneous.

In the Maloa Pathar a little to the west of Jorhat town there is a large tumulus known as the *barbheti*, which is said to have been the site of the *namghor* of the Moanaria gosain in the latter half of the seventeenth century. According to the Ahom chronicles, each disciple of the gosain brought one sod for the construction of this enormous mound, and this enabled him to ascertain their

number. Two smaller mounds near by are known as the *majar bheti* and the *majia bheti*, and were the sites of the houses of the gosain and his brother. Old Ahom cannon are common in the district, and there is one of really enormous size, which has been placed in position on the banks of the Sibsagar tank.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

AHOM KINGS.		MUHAMMADAN INVASIONS.	
A. D.		A. D.	
1228	Sukapha.	1204	Baktiar Khilji—Invades Assam.
1268	Sutenpha.	1220	Ghiyas-ud-din Bahadur Shah—Advances to Sadiya, but is defeated.
1281	Subinpha.	1256	Iktiyarud-din Yuzbak Tughril Khan—Invades the Brahmaputra Valley, but is ultimately defeated.
1293	Sukangpha.	1337	Muhammed Shah—Sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish.
1332	Sukampha.		
1364	Sutupha—Treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Saffrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.		
1376-1380	Interregnum.		
1380	Sukemthi—A weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1389-1398	Interregnum.		
1398	Sudangpha.		
1407	Siyangpha.		
1422	Suphukpha.		
1439	Susingpha—Defeats Nagas.		
1488	Suhangpha—defeated by Kacharis in 1490, and murdered by a convict.		
1493	Supimpha—A cruel prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1497	Suhunmung, <i>alias</i> Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja—Conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom in 1523. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bharell river. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur, his capital, in 1536. Assassinated 1539.		
1539	Sukhenmung—Built Gargaon (Nazira).	1509-1534	Viswa Singh—Founds Koch kingdom, advances against Ahoms but was apparently defeated.
1552	Sukampha.	1534-1584	Nar Narayan—Conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon, circa 1563 A. D. Subduces Raja of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur, Tippera and Sylhet. Kala Pahar invades Assam in 1563 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.
1611	Suchengpha or Pratap Singh—Assists Bali Narayan against Musalmans, besieges Hajo, but is driven back. Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.	1581-1593	Raghu Rai—Obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankosh.
1649	Surumpha—Deposed.	1593-1614	Parikshit—Builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakshmi Narayan, calls in Muhammadans to his aid.
1652	Suchingpha—Deposed.	1614-1637	Bali Narayan—Invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—(continued).**AHOM KINGS.**

A. D.	
1654	Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh—Ahoms occupy Goalpara 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla, who enters Gargaon, 1661.
1663	Chakradwaj—Ahoms re-occupy Gauhati in 1667.
1670	Adayaditya Singh—Assassinated.
1672	Suktumpha—Poisoned. Musalmans re-occupy Gauhati.
1674	Suhung—Assassinated.
1674	Teunkungiya—Assassinated.
1674	Suhungpha—Blinded and murdered.
1677	Sudinpha—Assassinated.
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja)—Assassinated.
1681	Gadadhar Singh—Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.
1695	Hudra Singh—Founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.
1714	Sib Singh—A weak prince, who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibsagar.
1744	Pramatta Singh.
1751	Rajeswar Singh—Decline of Ahom power.
1769	Lakshmi Singh—Outbreak of Moamaria rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.
1780	Gaurinath Singh—Driven to Gauhati by Moamaras. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1792, who is, however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja, asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.
1795	Kamaleswar Singh—Deposes Krishna Narayan.
1809	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816.
1816	Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE—(concluded).**AHOM KINGS.**

A. D.	
1818	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave. Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between British and Burmese Governments.
1825	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo, by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

CHAPTER III. THE PEOPLE.

Area and density—Towns and villages—Growth of population—Migration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and tribe—Religion—Saktism—Sivaitism—Vaishnavism—The Sattras of Sibsagar—Muhammadans—Animism—Other religions—Christians—Occupations—Marriage customs—Amusements and festivals—List of sattras.

The district covers an area of 4,996 square miles, and in 1901 had a density of 120 to the square mile or 33 less than that reported from Kamrup. It must not, however, be supposed from this that Sibsagar is sparsely peopled. West of the Dhansiri there is very little population, but a dense population would be an impossibility in the Mikir Hills. Equally difficult would it be to settle many persons in the flooded tracts that fringe the Brahmaputra, but south of this flooded area and east of the Dhansiri there is no lack of inhabitants. In Golaghat there are considerable areas with a population of over 300 to the square mile. In the Jorhat tahsil there was, in 1901, a density of 441, while two mauzas near the town had a density of no less than 621. In Sibsagar, too, the area covered by the Sibsagar and Namtidol tahsils and the Hachara and Joktali mauzas, 344 square miles in all, had a density of 341. Even in the more densely settled tracts Sibsagar is in no way overpeopled, but the pressure on the soil is much more severe than the figure

Area and
density.

of density for the district would at first suggest. Table III shows the population and density in each minor unit in 1901.

Towns and villages.

Sibsagar contains three small towns, Sibsagar (population 1901, 5,712), Jorhat (population 1901, 2,899), and Golaghat (population 1901, 2,359) and 2,109 villages. The villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of the fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be seen till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betel-nut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. It is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that the statistics of villages are of little practical importance, but, taking them for what they are worth, it appears that villages run small, and in 1901 about half the population were living in hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

Growth of population.

In 1841, Mr. Robinson estimated that the population of Sibpur, which was bounded on the west by the Dhansiri and on the north by the Brahmaputra and thus

excluded the Mikir Hills and the Majuli, was 200,000 souls.* A census of the district including the Majuli taken in 1844 showed a population of 159,573 persons; but this census was probably more inaccurate than the Deputy Commissioner imagined, and even he was of opinion that the population was about 180,000.† In 1872, the first census of the whole of the Province was taken, and though it was non-synchronous it was probably more accurate than any of its predecessors. The abstract in the margin shows what a large and steady increase has

	Population.	Percentage variation.	taken place at each of the three last enumerations. A great part of this increase is due to the coolies who have been imported in large num-
1872	317,799		
1881	392,545	+23.5	
1891	480,659	+22.4	
1901	597,969	+24.4	

bers to work on the tea gardens situated in the district; but it is satisfactory to know that, in contradistinction to Lower and Central Assam, there has been a substantial natural growth of population. Natural growth is perhaps best measured by the increase in the number of those born and censused in the district, and this amounted to nearly 13 per cent between 1881 and 1891, and to nearly 17 per cent in the next decade. Many of these so-called natives are the children of foreign mothers, but the caste table shows that between 1891 and 1901 indigenous castes and tribes, who might fairly be classified as "Assamese," increased by $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

* Robinson's Descriptive Account of Assam -- Calcutta, 1841, p. 317.

† Report on Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills -- Calcutta, 1854. Sibsagar, p. 2.

Increase by subdivisions.

The statement in the margin shows that during the last decade the increase has been especially pronounced in the Sibsagar subdivision. This, no doubt, is largely due to the fact that during this period there has been a large increase in the area under tea, which necessitates a corresponding increase in the labour force. Further there is more waste land available for settlement in Sibsagar than in Jorhat, where the population is already fairly dense, and this is a fact which naturally largely influences settlers when they leave the gardens.

Subdivision.	Population 1901.	Percentage of increase.	
		1891-1901	1881-1891
Sibsagar	211,809	+ 32.1	+ 24.1
Jorhat	119,137	+ 20.9	+ 23.1
Golaghat	167,023	+ 19.9	+ 23.3

Migration.

In 1901, 151,612 persons, or just a little over one fourth of the total population had been born outside the frontiers of Assam. About one half of these people came from the Chota Nagpur division of Bengal, which supplies Assam with the healthiest but most costly of her labourers, while one-quarter came from other places in that Province. Upwards of 18,000 persons came from the Central Provinces; nearly 9,000 from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh; and over 4,000 from Madras. The great bulk of these persons had been imported to the tea gardens as coolies. There were a few artizans and carpenters from China and the Punjab, and a few natives of Bombay, who were either employed on the railway or interested in the liquor trade. The natives of Afghanistan are the Kabulis or pedlars who travel all over the Province in the cold

weather. The Nepalese are for the most part graziers who keep large herds of buffalo on the marshes near the Brahmaputra, and the natives of Rajputana are the shrewd Marwari merchants who have succeeded in monopolising practically the whole of the trade of the Assam Valley. As far as inter-district migration is concerned, Sibsagar sends settlers to the waste lands of Lakhimpur and Darrang, and receives labourers from Kamrup and Goalpara. Statistics of birthplace by sub-divisions will be found in Table V.

The proportion of women in Sibsagar has always been unusually low. In 1872, there were only 919 women to every thousand men, and since that date the ratio has declined till, in 1901, there were only 886. This disproportion between the sexes is partly due to immigration, but the effects of immigration can be discounted by working out the ratio on those born in the district and censused in the Province. Women, however, still remain in a pronounced minority, and in 1901 there were only 925 to every thousand males. This ratio is lower than that returned from any other district in Assam, and differs in the most marked degree from that recorded in the neighbouring district of Nowgong, where it was as high as 1,016. The causes which determine the proportion of the sexes are most obscure, but generally speaking there seems to be a tendency for the number of women to increase where public health is bad and vitality low. This would serve to account for the strength of the female element in the population of Now-

Sex and
marriage.

gong, but leaves the scarcity of women in Sibsagar unexplained. Unskilful midwifery and the debilitating effects of excessive child bearing probably tend to shorten the lives of the mothers of the race.

It is satisfactory, at any rate, to know that the deficiency of women is not due to the prevalence of early marriage. The figures in the margin show the percentage of Hindu girls under 10 and between 10 and 15, who have performed the marriage ceremony; and the proportion between 15 and 20, who even according to Western ideas would be considered *aptae viro*, who are still unwed. For the purposes of comparison, the figures for Goalpara have been included, as unfortunately in that district the idea has gradually gained ground that social advancement can in some way be obtained by subjecting an immature child to the responsibilities of matrimony. For every child wife or widow under 10 in Sibsagar, there are 8 in Goalpara; and between 10 and 15 the proportion in the two districts is as 1 to 6. The proportion of potential mothers, *i. e.*, married women between 15 and 40 is obviously a factor which materially affects the growth of the people. In this respect Sibsagar is somewhat at a disadvantage as they only form 158 per mille of the total population; and, though this is one above the average for the Province as a whole, it is much below

Percentage of Hindu girls married and widowe l.

	Age. 0—10	Age. 10—15
Sibsagar	0·6	10·9
Goalpara	4·8	62·4

Percentage of Hindu girls unmarried.

	Age. 15—20
Sibsagar	47·7
Goalpara	7·2

the figure for the Central Provinces which in 1901 was 169.

From the statement in the margin it will be seen **Infirmities** that Sibsagar is fairly free from three out of the four special infirmities selected for record at the census. The proportion of lunatics, though higher than that for the Indian Empire as a whole, is lower than the average for the Province, while the proportion of deaf-mutes is below, and that of the blind largely below the provincial average. The number of lepers is, however, considerable, and the ratio of those afflicted with this dire disease in 1901 was nearly three times as high as that recorded for the Indian Empire as a whole. In this respect Sibsagar is in no way peculiar, as, for reasons which have hitherto completely baffled medical science, leprosy has always been extremely prevalent in Assam.

Fifty-nine per cent of the people in 1901 returned **Language.** Assamese as their customary form of speech, 4 per cent Mikir, and 2 per cent Miri, two other languages indigenous to the Province. Bengali was returned by 19 per cent of the people, but it is doubtful whether to an Assamese enumerator Bengali means anything more than a foreign language, and this term probably included many forms of speech which would have been hardly intelligible at Nadia. Six and a half per cent of the people reported that they spoke Hindustani. Assamese is described by

Number in 10,000 males afflicted in 1901.			
	Sibsagar.	Assam.	India.
Blindness ...	5	10	12
Deaf-mutism ...	6	9	6
Insanity ...	4	5	3
Leprosy ...	13	13	5

Mr. Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali.* It comes from Bihar through Northern Bengal and not from Bengal Proper. The plural and the feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax, and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh being converted into h by the Assamese and ch into s.

**Caste and
Tribe.**

The caste distribution of Sibsagar is such as a perusal of the history of the district would lead one to expect. Brahmans are fairly numerous, as is only natural in the neighbourhood of the Raja's court. Kayasthas have been attracted to the district, partly in hope of employment under the Ahom kings, partly to work on the gardens which provide employment for a large number of the clerkly caste. Other respectable castes such as the Kalita, the Kewat, and the Koch, are fairly numerous, especially in Jorhat. The principal caste is, however, the Ahoms, who are especially numerous in the Sibsagar subdivision. Outside tea gardens and the camps of railway coolies, very nearly every second person in this subdivision in 1901 was a member of this caste. The number in Jorhat, though considerable, was nothing like so large, and Golaghat contained barely one-sixth of the number found in Sibsagar. The Chutiyas are also strongly represented, and most of them are found in Jorhat, as are also the Nadiyals or fishing folk. The tea industry

* Report on the Census of India, 1901, Vol. I, p. 324.

is of great importance, and the European population of the district in 1901 was no less than 356. The cooly castes most strongly represented were the Santals, Mundas, and Bhuiyas ; but it is hardly necessary to particularize further as details for all the more important castes will be found in Table V. The following pages contain a brief account of the indigenous castes and tribes which had more than 5,000 representatives in the district in 1901. An alphabetical glossary of all the castes censused in Assam will be found in Chapter XI of the Report on the Census of that year.

The Ahoms are the descendants of the Shan tribe ^{Ahom.}

Males	...	56,900
Females	...	54,219

who entered Assam in the thirteenth century, and gradually extended their sway over the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. They are divided into three sections, the Chamuas or gentry, the Kheluas or functional sections, and the Meluas or servants of the royal family. These sections are not endogamous, though there is a natural tendency for men to take wives from families in their own rank of life, and inter-marriage between certain families such as the Handikoi and the Pakimara is prohibited, for reasons which are not very clear. The Ahoms still possess a sturdier physique than the ordinary Assamese, and the Muhammadan chronicler of Mir Jumla's invasion describes them as "strong, quarrelsome, and bold." The complexion is fair, the cheek bones high, and the face unusually broad. Practically all the Ahoms are now, in name at any rate,

Hindus, but their new religion sits lightly on them, and the lower orders still bury their dead. As amongst the other humbler Assamese castes, cohabitation often takes place after a feast has been given to the villagers and there is nothing in the nature of a religious ceremony. The more respectable form is the *chaklong*, which consists in the interchange of the *temi* and *katari*, the box in which betel-nut is carried and the knife with which it is cut ; the tying of the nuptial knot and a feast to the friends and relations. A hole is then cut in the corner of the house through which the bride is removed. A woman once married by the *chaklong* ceremony cannot be re-married by the same rite, though she can take a second husband by the simpler form of marriage which is known as *gur pithaguri*. Divorce is recognized, and the parties can marry again. Agriculture is the staple occupation of the caste. Their social position is a somewhat peculiar one. The fact that, prior to our occupation of the country, they were the ruling race obtains for them a considerable measure of respect, but the recency of their conversion to Hinduism necessitates a very low place in the Brahmanical order, and Brahmans will not, as a rule, take water from their hands.

Borias.

The Borias are a caste peculiar to Assam, which is formed from the offspring of Brahman and Ganak widows and their descendants. Boria is said to be derived from "bari", a widow, but the people prefer to call themselves Sut. This term is said by some to be

Males	...	2,747
Females	...	2,601

connected with the word Sudra, and by others to be derived from Sut, the expounder of the Puranas, who was himself the son of a Brahman widow. But the most plausible explanation seems to be that it is an abbreviation of Suta, the name given in the Shastras to the offspring of a Brahman woman by a Vaisya or Kshattriya father. One authority defines a Boria as the child of a Brahman widow, and a Sut as the result of union between a Sudra widow and a Brahman; but it is doubtful whether this explanation is correct, as in the latter case the child would presumably be of the same caste as its mother. The children of Brahman girls, who have attained puberty before marriage and so have to be married to men of a lower caste, are also classed with Borias. Agriculture is the ordinary occupation of the Borias, and their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of other low caste Assamese.

There are more Brahmans in Sibsagar than in any other district of Assam except **Brahmans.**

Males	...	8,090
Females	...	6,348

Kamrup and Sylhet; but this is only natural as priests are generally found in close propinquity to a native court. The Brahmans of Sibsagar are supposed to have originally come from Upper India, Mithila, Orissa, Benares, and Kanouj, and have little in common with the Brahmans of Bengal. The great majority are natives of Assam, but there are a few Bengali Brahmans, who in social questions keep themselves quite distinct from their Assamese *confrères*. The great centres of the Brahman population are Dergaon, the neighbourhood of Jorhat, and

the Majuli. Most of the Assamese Brahmans obtain their living from agriculture, though they are not of course allowed to plough with their own hands. Foreign Brahmans are generally employed in some ministerial capacity.

The Chutiyas, like the Koch and the Ahoms, are one of the race castes of Assam. Their physical appearance suggest a Mongolian origin, their language, which is still preserved amongst the Deoris or priestly clan, belongs to the Bodo family, and it seems probable that they are a section of the great Bodo race which includes the Garo, the Kachari, and the Tippera. It is supposed that their original home was in the hills through which the Subansiri makes its way, and that they entered the Assam Valley about a thousand years ago. The story of the decline and fall of the Chutiya power has already been told in the preceding chapter. Their conquerors wisely deported the leading families to different parts of the Assam Valley, but the great mass of the Chutiyas are still to be found in Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The caste is divided into four subdivisions, Hindu, Ahom, Deori, and Borahi. The latter, as their name implies, are still unconverted and eat pork, but the number of Borahi Chutiyas is very small.

**The Deori
Chutiyas.**

The Deori Chutiya are the old priestly caste, and are described as follows in the Census Report of 1901 :—

“ Their original home was on the banks of the Kundil river east of Sadiya, but when the Ahom power began to decline, they were harried by the hill tribes in the neighbourhood, and at the

beginning of the century they migrated to North Lakhimpur, and from there moved to the Majuli, the Dikrang river, Sissi Mukh, and the Baligao mauza in Jorhat. The Mongolian type is much more strongly marked in them than in the ordinary Chutiya, and they might easily be mistaken for Miris. They keep pigs and fowls, but their most distinguishing characteristic is the enormous size of the houses in which they dwell. These houses are built on *changs*, and are enlarged from time to time to make room for the increasing size of the family. There are frequently as many as sixty persons living in one long barrack, and the Chutiyas themselves say that there are sometimes double this number living under one roof. The Deori Chutiyas on the Majuli profess to be Hindus, but beef is the only article of food from which they abstain, and it is said that all that they could remember of the instructions of their Gosain was that they were to pray to God, and keep their instructions secret; and it was possibly with the idea of avoiding any risk of indiscretion that they had so carefully forgotten all that they had been told. Their temples are copies in wood and thatch of the famous copper temple at Sadiya, which was at one time a centre of worship for all the hill tribes on the north-east frontier, but has long been in ruins. These models are small buildings about eight feet square, raised on high bamboos, and not unlike pigeon houses in appearance, standing in enclosures, into which no one but the temple officials are allowed to enter. In the principal village on the Majuli, a copper roof is being placed on the model to render the resemblance more complete. Mr. Brown, who was at one time Assistant Commissioner in North Lakhimpur, reports that the Deoris attach great importance to their own religion, but that a knowledge of its mysteries is apparently confined to the priests and the older men. There are four priests attached to each khel, the Bar and Saru Deori and the Bar and Saru Bharali. The two Deoris alone are entitled to enter the temple, and the Bharalis, as their name implies, are mainly concerned with the temporalities of the goddess.

The chief gods are three Gerasi Geri (Assamese 'Bura-buri') worshipped by the Debongia khel; Pishadema (Assamese 'Boliya hemata'), the elder son, worshipped by the Tengapaniya khel; and Peshasi (the daughter), who is also known as Tam-eshari Mai (the mother of the copper temple), and Kechakhati (the eater of raw flesh). The latter name is given in memory of the annual human sacrifice which in former times used to be

offered to the goddess, the victim being provided by the Ahom Raja. This abomination was discontinued during the reign of Gaurinath Singh, and, according to the Deoris, the downfall of the Ahoms was largely due to the neglect of this religious rite.

The human
sacrifices
at the
copper
temple.

The following interesting account of the human sacrifices offered near Sadiya is extracted from a note left by Lieutenant Dalton in the library of the Nowgong office :—

“ The chief and oldest of the shrines was the Tamar Ghar, or copper temple, which still exists in ruins and was lately visited by Captain Vetch. It is described as a small stone building nearly square, built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins not clamped. The roof was of copper, but it has fallen in, and now lies there. The interior is eight feet square. The whole is enclosed within a brick wall 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a small stone tripod. Here human sacrifices were yearly offered till a very recent date, but latterly the Ahom kings gave for the purpose malefactors who had been sentenced to capital punishment. Suitable victims of this description were not, however, always to be obtained, and then a particular *khel* or tribe of the king's subjects was bound to provide one, for which they had certain privileges and immunities accorded them, such as being exempted from the payment of ferry and market duties; and were thence called *Sarh*, or free. For it was necessary that, the victims to be immolated, should be of pure caste and perfect form; the slightest blemish or mutilation, even the boring of an ear, rendering them unfit to be offered to the Gosaini, or goddess. Brahmans and members of the royal family were exempted as a privilege; Doms, Haris, Musalmans and women were excluded as unfit. For some time preceding the sacrifice the victim to be immolated was detained at the temple, where he fared sumptuously, till in sufficiently plump condition to suit the supposed taste of the Gosaini. On the day appointed he was led forth magnificently attired and decorated with gold and silver ornaments to be shown to the multitude that assembled on the occasion; then withdrawn and led by a private path trodden only by the officiating priests and their victim to the brink of a deep pit, where he was divested of his fineries and decapitated, so that the body fell into the pit. The head was added to a heap of ghastly skulls that were piled in view of the shrine. These sacrifices appear to have continued till the subversion of the

Ahom Government by the Burmese, when the Deoris abandoned their ancient possessions in the vicinity of the copper temple, to the fearful rites of which they had for upwards of six centuries administered, with the slaughter by their own account of some six hundred human victims."

The Ahom Chutiyas have for some generations been converts to Hinduism, but in the social scale they rank below the Hindu Chutiya, and their presence in a house is said to debar a Brahman from drinking water there. The Ahoms and Hindu Chutiyas can smoke but cannot eat together, and, in theory, cannot inter-marry. A member of the Ahom section can, however, obtain a Hindu Chutiya girl if he is willing to pay a slightly higher price for her, but the bride sinks to the status of her husband.

Hindu Chutiyas are sometimes united by the *hompura* ceremony, while the *chaklong* rite, which is the Ahom form of marriage, is in vogue amongst the Ahom Chutiyas. The Chutiyas are, however, far from strict in their views on matrimonial matters, and one native gentleman reports that 50 per cent of the so-called married couples have performed no ceremony at all, and that a girl sometimes changes her husband nine or ten times. The social position of the caste is low, and almost all of them are petty cultivators. They burn their dead and perform the *sradh* ceremony at the expiry of a month. Brahmans of inferior social standing act as their priests.

The Jugis are a low caste whose traditional occupation is weaving. In Sibsagar, under native rule, the Jugis were entrusted with the task

Males	...	...	3,424
Females	...	...	2,867

of rearing the *pat* silk worms, while the Katanis, a subdivision of the caste, spun the thread. They have now largely taken to agriculture, and silkworm rearing is only practised as a subsidiary occupation. Like other humble castes they lay claim to a high origin. According to one account they are the offspring of Brahman widows and ascetics or jogis, while others assert that they are descended from Gorakshanath, who was an incarnation of Siva. In Sibsagar, the name Jugi is derived from *joga* to supply, because they fed the worms while the Katanis spun the thread. Others connect it with *jugieri*, the name of a creeper whose leaves are eaten by the *pat* worm. The Jugis are endeavouring to improve their social position by celebrating the *hompura* rite, when their circumstances admit of such expenditure, and by burning instead of burying their dead; but good class Brahmans still decline to serve as their priests.

Kacharis.

An account of the origin of the Kacharis has already been given in the preceding chapter, and of the difference that exists between the Dimasa and the Bodo.

Males	...	..	10,036
Females	...	...	6,582

In Lower Assam, Kacharis, when they are converted to Hinduism, are generally incorporated into the ranks of the Koch caste, and the number of Hindu Kacharis is comparatively small. In Sibsagar this is not the case. The great majority of the caste have been converted to Hinduism, and most of them have foresworn pigs, fowls

and liquor, and live much as do the other humble Hindu castes. They do not as a rule attempt to change their names, though, of recent years, some have taken to calling themselves Ahoms or Chutiyas or occasionally Koch, and there is one family of Kachari priests who actually style themselves Kayastha. The broad distinction which in Lower Assam exists between the Kachari and the ordinary lower caste Assamese is hardly to be found in Sibsagar, and the tribe has lost its special tribal characteristics.

The following description **Kalita.**

Males	...	19,790
Females	...	16,837

of the Kalitas is reproduced from the Report on the Census of 1901:—

“There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is, that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who, fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called Kul-lupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence; or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests, this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled in Assam, at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word ‘Kalita’ was originally applied to all Aryans who were not Brahmans.

“The Kalitas are divided into two main subdivisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional subcastes. In Upper Assam, Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found.

Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one, that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the '*hom*' ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can inter-marry with, and eat *kachchi* with, the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional subdivisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These subdivisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita, and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their rank; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste, a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two."

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam Proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman. The poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is

not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification. But it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl who becomes pregnant, does not forfeit her position in the society, unless her lover is of lower caste.

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners, and most of **Kayasthas.** them earn their living as clerks or officers in the employ of Government or of the Managers of different tea gardens. Kalitas who have risen above the necessity for manual labour frequently describe themselves as Kayasthas.

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose **Kewats.** hands Brahmans will take water, and who, according to Assamese ideas, rank immediately after the Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats, as the Jaliya, or fishing subdivision of the caste, occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common except the name Kewat or Kai-bartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The ordinary occupation of the caste is agriculture, but a few of them have succeeded in reaching that desirable position in which the pen takes the place of the ploughshare as a means of livelihood. A respectable Brahman acts as their priest.

Males	...	...	2,078
Females	...	...	1,713

...	14,024
...	12,261

Mikirs.

According to Colonel Dalton, the Mikirs were originally settled in the North Cachar

Males	...	...	11,687
Females	...	...	11,224

Hills, but were driven westward into Jaintia territory

by the Kacharis. Dissatisfied with the reception accorded to them there they sent an embassy to the Ahom governor at Raha, offering to place themselves under the protection of his master : but, as the luckless delegates were unable to make themselves understood, they were forthwith buried alive in a tank which that officer happened to be excavating. Hostilities ensued, but the Mikirs were soon suppressed, and were settled in the hills that bear their name, though a considerable colony is still to be found in South Kamrup and the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills. They are divided into four tribes, Chintong, Ronghang, Amri, and Dumrali ; and these tribes are again subdivided into various exogamous groups. In the hills the Mikirs live by *jhum* or shifting cultivation and raise crops of cotton, chillies, rice, and vegetables. All the members of a family live in one house which is thus of considerable size. Their religion is of the usual animistic type, and is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits. Infant marriage is unknown and sexual license within the tribe prior to marriage is tolerated. From Table V it will be seen that Mikirs are only found in the Golaghat subdivision. For further information with regard to this tribe, reference should be made to the Monograph by Sir Charles Lyall, K.C.S.I., which is now under preparation.

The Miris, or as they style themselves, Mishing, were **Miris.** originally settled in the hills to the north of the Lakhimpur district, between the Daffa and the Abor territory. They are thought to be members of the Thibeto-Burman family, and, if this is so, are akin to the Bodo or Kacharis, Garos, Rabhas, Meches and other cognate tribes. Their countenances are of a distinctly Mongolian type, but their appearance is by no means unpleasing. They are strongly built, with finely developed limbs, and their complexions often have a distinctly ruddy hue. They are cleaner in their persons than many of the Thibeto-Burman tribes, and fully appreciate the advantages of the bath. The Miris are divided into two main endogamous septs, the Barogams and the Dohgams, which are again subdivided into a large number of minor groups. In the plains they always live near running water. Their dwellings are built on piles, and are sometimes as much as 40 yards in length and contain from twenty to thirty inmates. Pigs and fowls scratch about beneath the houses, which are usually built in two long rows, and differ from those of the Assamese in having no fruit trees or gardens round them. The Miris support themselves by agriculture, and raise crops of summer rice, mustard, millet, pulse, and sweet potatoes. Though nearly half the Miris of Sibsagar describe themselves as Hindus, they have liberal notions with regard to diet, and eat pork and buffalo flesh and drink rice beer. Their marriages are somewhat costly affairs, and entail considerable expenditure upon food, which is

Males	...	...	9,372
Females	...	...	8,260

borne by the families of both contracting parties. Sexual intercourse before marriage is not regarded with much disfavour, and traces of polyandry are to be found in the fact that adultery with a member of the husband's family is considered less heinous than if the offence is committed outside the clan. The dead are usually buried, and the funeral ceremonies include a substantial feast. The Miri religion is of the ordinary animistic type. Its principal feature is the propitiation of malignant spirits likely to do harm. The tribe believe in the immortality of the soul, but do not attempt to dogmatize on the subject and are somewhat impressed by the fact that the dead never return to this world.

**The Nadi-
yals.**

The Doms, or as they prefer to call themselves Nadiyals, are the boating and fishing caste of Assam.

Males	...	...	11,815
Females	...	...	11,234

They are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though their manners and customs do not differ materially from that of the Assamese Nadiyal, except in the following particular. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghokata* net, and in theory only sell their fish on the river's bank within a paddle's throw of the boat, whereas the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market. The Nadiyals are probably descended from the aboriginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam before the Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly in their habits and particu-

lar in their observance of the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for the objectionable expression "Dom," which undoubtedly they have borne for centuries, by saying that they were the last of the Assamese to be converted from Buddhism. They are darker in complexion than most of the Assamese, but have a good physique, and by no means uncomely faces. Their women are most prolific, and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittil Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be descended from a Brahman father and Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and inter-marry with Nadiyal girls.

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. **The Rajbansi or Koch.**

Males	...	...	14,704
Females	...	...	13,027

Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently of Mongolian origin, which at

the beginning of the sixteenth century rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur, and by the middle of the sixteenth century the Koch king had attained to a position of such power that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that at the

present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste into which new converts to Hinduism are enrolled. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off.

Religion.

Classified by religion, the population of Sibsagar was distributed in the following proportions in 1901—Hinduism 89 per cent; Animism 7 per cent; and Muhammadanism 4 per cent. The three principal sects of Hinduism recorded at the census of 1901 were Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism.

**Hindus.
Saktists.**

Thirty per cent of the Hindus who returned their sect in 1901 described themselves as followers of Sakti, or worshippers of the reproductive powers as manifested in the female. Nearly five-sevenths of these Saktists were, however, censused on the tea plantations, and a considerable number of those living in the villages were probably ex-garden coolies. The great majority of these persons were no doubt so styled, because they ate meat and drank liquor, though this in a garden coolie is often not so much an indication of his adherence to the goddess Kali, as of the uncertainty of his title to the name of Hindu at all. Saktism is a foreign growth in Assam, and Vaishnavism is the national form of Hinduism.

Many of the Ahom kings were, however, supporters of the Saktists, and a list of the temples erected through their liberality will be found appended to this chapter.

Sivaitism is the counterpart of Saktism, and is concerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, 8,090 persons in Sibsagar professed this special form of Hinduism. It is, however, doubtful whether the distinction between the worshippers of Siva and Sakti was very clearly understood. Sivaitism.

A considerable number of Hindus did not attempt to specify their sect in 1901, but of those who committed themselves to this extent nearly 68 per cent declared their adherence to Vaishnavism. The following description of the development of Vaishnavism in Assam is extracted from the Report on the Census of 1901. Vaishnavism.

"Sankar Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A. D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha, who, according to tradition, had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the king of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order, and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision. Here in conjunction with his disciple Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushia sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste, and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sankar himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people who formed a larger proportion of his converts, found his injunction a counsel of perfection. The Mahapurushias are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too

common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushia faith is the *sattr* at Barpeta, where a large number of persons persist in living, huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination, with the result that the mortality from small-pox in the neighbourhood of the *sattr* is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans re-asserted their influence, and shortly after Sankar's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects, called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthi, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushias, by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste, and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushia creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is, in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthis, and the Gopal Deb Panthis, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or 'other Vaishnavas,' as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no God but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols; the latter will only recognize Brahmans as their gossains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes that the breach between him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day, when the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety.

This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain. Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater, and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition.

Sixty-three per cent of the Vaishnavites in Sibsagar were said to be members of the Mahapurushia sect. But it must not be understood from this that they are the adherents of the spiritual descendants of Sankar Deb, whose *namghor* is situated at Barpeta. Nearly all of them are followers of the Majuli gosains, and most of them should therefore have been classified as Bamunias.

There are many *sattras** in Assam, but four stand out pre-eminent above all others, Auniati, Dakhinpat, Garamur, and Kuruabahi. The first three are situated on the Majuli, are under the control of Brahman gosains, and are as strictly celibate as the mediæval monasteries. But their founder most sensibly made provision for the perpetuation of a line of priests trained up amidst the holy influences of a religious institution, and directed that the inhabitants of the Kuruabahi *sattra*, which is situated in Nowgong, should be allowed to marry. The gosains of the other three *sattras* are thus either brought from Kuruabahi, or from "little *sattras*" in close proximity to the main institution, in which there are families of married Brahmans. The Auniati and Dakhinpat

The *sattras*
of Sibsagar.

* A *sattra* is a religious college which is in some respects not unlike a mediæval monastery.

sattras both possess large grants of land, which were originally made by the Ahom Rajas and confirmed by the British Government. The Garamur *sattra* is also said to have been well endowed, by Sib Singh, in whose reign it was founded; but, at the time when the Commissioner was enquiring into the validity of the claims put forward by the various religious institutions in Assam, the gosain was absent at Brindaban and took no personal interest in the matter. The title deeds had been lost in the troublous times of the Moamaria insurrection and the Burmese invasion, there was no one to represent the *sattra*, and its claims were never submitted for the consideration of Government. The result was that such grants of land as it may originally have possessed lapsed to the state, and it is only recently that 1,000 *bighas** of land were given to it as an act of grace.

Source of
income.

The income of the gosains is, however, derived from other sources besides land. Every disciple is expected to make a small contribution in cash or kind each year to his spiritual leader. The demand is small enough, and does not generally exceed from four to eight annas in cash, with five seers of rice, and a handkerchief or other cloth woven at home, or a certain quantity of silk thread. This in itself is only a small tax upon the villager, but the aggregate of many such subscriptions serves to make the larger *sattras* extremely prosperous institutions.

In every village in which the gosain has any considerable number of disciples he appoints a local representa-

* 3.025 *bighas* are equivalent to one acre.

tive or *medhi*, * who either collects these contributions and conveys them to the *sattra*, or hands them over to a superior collecting officer termed *Raj medhi*. In return he is exempted from personally making any payment. He also receives fees from the villagers for attending the funeral obsequies of any of his fellow disciples, and generally enjoys a position of some dignity.

The following description of the *sattra* at Garamur The Garamur Sattra. gives a fair idea of the general appearance of the larger of these institutions. The building is approached by a good road, which has been constructed at some little expense by Nuniya coolies. They were paid from contributions received from the disciples of the gosain, as, even in the interests of so revered a man, the Assamese peasant will not consent to labour on the roads. The *namghor* itself is a huge structure, and, though the roof of corrugated iron seems somewhat out of place in such surroundings, within it is sufficiently spacious and gloomy to satisfy all the conventional requirements of a place of worship.

The roof is supported on huge wooden pillars, and the great floor space is almost entirely bare, save for one or two lecterns on which the sacred writings are reposing. The actual shrine is a separate building closely adjoining the eastern end of the *namghor*, and contains a single trinity of deities before whom offerings of fruit and grain are made. This shrine is very different from the *pene-tralia* of the Saktist temples. There are no traces of

* This official amongst the lower castes is often known as a *sajtola*.

blood or grease, there is nothing disgusting or grotesque, and the whole place is dominated by that note of decency and propriety which is so marked a characteristic of the Vaishnavism of the Majuli. The *namghor* is surrounded by gardens of flowers and fruit trees, and, in addition to plantains and graceful areca palms, there are various members of the citron family whose golden fruit shows bright against the dark green foliage. In a square around these gardens stand the lines (*hathi*) in which the *bhokots* (resident monks) live. They consist of well built rows of rooms, which are much more spacious than those ordinarily occupied by the Assamese and are kept scrupulously clean and neat. Nothing could exceed the courtesy of the welcome extended to any Government officer visiting the *sattrā*. The smiling monks flock round him, chairs are placed in the portico of the *namghor*, and the gosain himself is summoned. On the arrival of the holy man his followers fall upon their knees, and the gosain and his visitor sit and converse in the midst of a circle of kneeling monks. There is something singularly gracious and pleasing in the whole atmosphere of the place. Everything is fresh, and neat, and well to do. The well groomed smiling monks are evidently at peace with themselves and with the world at large, and even the little boys who flock around them are unusually clean and well behaved. These children are recruited from the neighbouring villages and trained up to be *bhokots*, but, if at any time they find the restraints of celibacy irksome, they are at liberty to return to the outer world.

The surroundings of the Dakhinpat *sattra* are even more attractive than those of Garamur. On entering the lich-gate, which is an almost invariable feature in these institutions, the visitor finds himself in a huge quadrangle. In place of the lawns of the Oxford Colleges there are great tanks whose banks are overshadowed by huge umbrageous trees. Auniati, on the other hand, is a less imposing place, as the neighbourhood is much exposed to flood, and the *sattra* buildings are crowded together on the highest land available.

**Dakhinpat
and Auniati.**

Altogether there are no less than 188 *sattras* in Sib-sagar, but very few of them possess any landed property, and nearly all are dependent on the contributions of their disciples. A list of these *sattras* will be found appended to this chapter. The following are the only *sattras* which hold any considerable grants of land. Auniati—revenue free 21,000 acres, half rates 600 acres ; Dakhinpat—revenue free 10,400 acres ; Kamalabari—revenue free 5,900 acres ; Bengnaati—revenue free 2,500 acres.

**188 Sattras
in Sibsagar.**

The Auniati *sattra* is said to have been founded by Niranjan Deb, a disciple of Gopal Deb, who in his turn was a follower of Damodar Deb. Jaiyadwaj Singh became a disciple of the gosain in 1653 A. D., and endowed the *sattra* with large grants of land. The gosain of that day took up his residence on the Majuli, which at that time was not separated from Rangpur by the Brahmaputra, as the main channel of the river then flowed down the Kherkutia Suti.

**Origin of
Auniati and
Dakhinpat.**

The Dakhinpat *sattra* was originally founded by Damodar Deb in the latter half of the sixteenth century in Kuch Bihar. He was succeeded by three gosains, Balodeb, Paramananda Deb, and Banamali Deb, who is said to have been endowed with more than human wisdom and sagacity. In 1653 A. D., during the incumbency of this priest, the *sattra* was moved from Kuch Bihar to a village in Sibsagar known as Majuli Rangoli Bahor. The gosain brought with him from Orissa an image of Vishnu, which is said to have been worshipped by Judhisthira, the hero of the Mahabharata. Like the gosain of Auniati, he was treated with much courtesy by Jaiyadwaj Singh, who endowed the *sattra* with large grants of land.

**Muhamma-
dans.**

In 1901, there were 24,878 Muhammadans in Sibsagar which was equivalent to 4 per cent of the total population. The great majority of these persons are Sunnis, and it is said that in places the Muhammadan villagers are still imbued with Hindu superstitions. *Mantras* are occasionally chanted in times of trouble, Ai is invoked when small-pox has appeared, and some even go the length of sacrificing fowls and pigeons. The Morias are a section of degraded Muhammadans who are said to be the descendants of prisoners who were captured when Turbuk was defeated and killed in 1532 A. D. They were employed in various capacities for which they showed themselves to be quite unfitted and were finally made braziers. They are said to be dirty and addicted to drink, and are regarded with contempt by their co-religionists. Outside the towns there are few masonry

mosques, and worship is usually conducted in a thatched hut which has nothing in its appearance to suggest that it is intended for a place of prayer. There are no propaganda for the dissemination of the faith, and Muhammadanism is said to make few if any converts. In Sibsagar the Darga or grave of Komaldya Khunkar Muhammad Gani, which is situated in Chokola village in the Banmukh mauza, is regarded as a place of peculiar sanctity, and is visited by pilgrims every year.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a clear **Animism**

Males	...	...	20 788
Females	...	...	18,415

and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and the simple aboriginal tribes

are no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking their religious beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. The way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small-pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to

suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can.

From Table IV it will be seen that there are hardly any members of the animistic tribes in the Sibsagar subdivision, and most of those censused there were Kacharis from Lower Assam employed on tea gardens. The Mikir Hills are in fact the great centre of the animistic population, and, except for a few Miris, there are hardly any unconverted tribesmen in the Sibsagar plain.

Minor Religions.

The religions which were not strongly represented in the district in 1901 were Buddhists (1,668); Jains (197); Brahmos (36); and Sikhs (17). The Buddhists are immigrants from the Shan States, who settled in Assam at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries and are locally known as Noras, Turungs, and Aitoneas.*

The Jains are the shrewd Marwari merchants to whom reference has been already made, and the Sikhs were men in the employ of the Assam-Bengal Railway Company.

Christians.

Sibsagar contains more native Christians than any other district in the plains, with the exception of Goalpara and Lakhimpur. Of recent years they have been steadily increasing in numbers, as in 1881 there were only 462 native Christians; in 1891, 1,048; and in 1901, 2,113. There is a branch of the American Baptist Mission in

* For an account of these colonies see Chapter X of the Census Report for 1891.

Sibsagar town and more than half of the native Christians professed themselves to be members of this sect.

Agriculture is the staple occupation of the people, and **Occupation.** the proportion of agriculturists in 1901 (91 per cent) was unusually large, even for an agricultural country like Assam. The bulk of these persons were petty landholders who held direct from Government, but the number of garden coolies was also very large. Fishing was the only other industry which supported as much as one per cent of the population. In 1901, the occupations of the people were classified under 520 different heads, and details for the great majority of these heads will be found in Table XV, Part II, in the second part of the Census Report. These figures do not, however, lend themselves readily to review. The proportion of workers to the total population (63 per cent) is unusually high. This is due to the fact that the wives and daughters of the ordinary cultivator work in the fields, and to the large number of garden coolies whose children begin to work at a very early age.

The forms of marriage in vogue are the *hompura*, **Marriage customs.** or full Hindu rite, when the sacred fire is lighted and a priest is engaged to perform the ceremony, the *kharu moni pindha* or *juran*, in which a feast is given to the friends and relations and ornaments are given to the girl, the system under which the bridegroom, who is called a *caponiya*, enters the house of his prospective father-in-law, and works for his wife as Jacob worked for Rachel, and the *chaklong* rite amongst the Ahoms

which has already been described. Brahmans, Kayasthas, and well-to-do Kalitas invariably perform the *hompura* ceremony, which may cost anything from fifty to two hundred rupees or even more*. This expenditure is incurred on the purchase of ornaments and clothing, on the payment of priests, musicians, and palki bearers, on the hire of elephants and horses, and on a feast to the relations and friends, the principal ingredients of which are rice, molasses, curds, and betel-nut.

The practice of taking a bride price used to be common but is going out of fashion, and is no longer considered to be quite good form. This perhaps is just as well, as marriage under any circumstances entails an expenditure which is often considerably more than the bridegroom can afford. Assamese girls are generally not married till they are old enough to develop tastes and inclinations of their own, and personal feeling is occasionally opposed to mere prudential considerations. A girl may, perhaps, have been courted for some years. Each *bihu* her lover has brought loads of rice, plantains, curds, and even pieces of opium to her father, and then at the last moment she goes off with some one else. The aggrieved suitor naturally seeks to be reimbursed for his expenditure, and the father in his turn endeavours to extort the money from the favoured man. These elopements or abductions are especially common at the *bihu* time. To protect her reputation the girl

* A description of this ceremony as practised in Assam will be found on p. 63 of the Census Report for 1901.

usually pretends to be carried off by force, but the very scene of the elopement is pre-arranged, and her lamentations are not as genuine as they are hearty. Any one in fact who wishes to see real grief and indignation should stumble, as is occasionally done by chance, on an abduction that has failed, when disappointment renders the young lady utterly incapable of concealing her real feelings.

Feasts, singing parties, and *bhaonas* or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the roadside, and on a winter's morning the traveller who is early abroad frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the pleasures of the previous night. The *dol jatra* or festival in honour of Krishna in February or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of his amorous exploits with the milkmaids of Brindaban, is not much in favour with the Assamese. Foreigners, on the other hand, whether still residing on tea gardens, or living in the villages, are great observers of the *fagua* as it is called. There is naturally a good deal of drinking, and garden managers always hope that the spring rains will break before this festival occurs, so that the risk of some drunken cooly accidentally firing the lines may be diminished. The *Janmastami* in honour of Krishna's birth in August or September, and the *Sivaratri* in memory of Siva in March, are kept

Amuse-
ments and
festivals.

as fasts rather than feasts. The Durga Puja is observed by Saktists.

The Bihus.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three *bihus* and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik *bihu* is celebrated on the last day of Asvin (October 14th), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of God, and, in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry, the people take cold food, such as curds, molasses, plantains and cold rice. The Magh *bihu* is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (January 14th). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw piled round a central pole are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires, a very necessary precaution as at this season of the year the mornings are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh *bihu* is to some extent a children's festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the smaller boys who sing and dance, and feast in small grass huts that have been constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh *bihu* which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th) is in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice, and are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relatives, and offer them presents of cloths and other things. Buffalo fights are organized in the rice fields

but these contests are rather tame affairs, and the animals very seldom injure one another. This *bihu* is an occasion of some license as boys and girls dance together in the fields and sing suggestive songs, and lapses from chastity between members of the same caste are considered almost venial. This is the season of the year when run-away matches are most common, and during the next few weeks the outraged but avaricious parent, complaining of the abduction of his daughter, is by no means an uncommon sight in the local courts. The *sradh* ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August-September, and that of Madhab three days before the *Janmastimi*. All work is laid aside on these two days and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of *hymns*.

List of Temples.

Tahsil or mauza in which situated.	Name of temple.	Date of construction and name of founder.
Dergaon mauza ...	Na Dol (Neghereting temple).	Built by Rajeswar Singh in 1751 A. D.
Namtidol tahsil ...	Bagi Dol ...	Built by Lakshmi Singh's mother in 1769 A. D.
	Barpatra Dol ...	Built by Harinath Barpatra in 1727 A. D.
	Gaurisagar Dol viz	Built by Rani Promotheswari, wife of Sib Singh, in 1727 A. D.
	Siva Dol	
	Devi „	

List of Temples—(concl'd.)

Tahsil or mauza in which situated.	Name of temple.	Date of construction and name of founder.
	Jaisagar Dol	Built by Rudra Singh.
	Majo Dol	
	Debigbar	
	Bhogghar	
	Namti Dol ...	Built by Namtial Borbarua.
	Natigosain Dol ...	Built by Natigosain.
	Rudrasagar Dol ...	Built by Lakshmi Singh in 1780 A. D.
Sibsagar tahsil ...	Barpatra Dol ...	Built by Kenduguria Barpatra.
	Gauri Ballav Dol ...	Built by Nagosain.
	Rungnath Dol	Built by Rudra Singh in 1704 A. D.
	Phagoosah Dol	
	Kharghar	
	Poojagar	
	Hara Gauri Debalaya	Built by Rudra Singh in 1704 A. D.
	Siva Dol (Isaneswar)	Built by Lakshmi Singh's mother in 1769 A. D.
Sibsagar town ...	Siva Dol	Built by Ambica, second queen of Sib Singh, in 1734 A. D.
	Vishnu Dol	
	Debi Dol	
Thaura Panidihing mauza.	Thaura Dol ...	Built by Dehingia Borbarua.

List of Sattras.

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattras.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattras.
	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVI- SION.	Gadhuli bazar...	Jorabari.
	<i>Brahman Gosain.</i>	Hachara ...	Khatpar.
Bakata ...	Chekaratali.	„ ...	Moramora.
„ ...	Michakuria.	Jakaichuk ...	Deopani Gazala.
Dopdar ...	Ratanpuria.	Joktali ...	Bareghar.
Kowarpur ...	Mahara.	„ ...	Namati.
Nazira ...	Mahara.	„ ...	Norabhari.
Salaguri ...	Bangajan.	„ ...	Saukajan.
	<i>Sudra Gosain.</i>	Kowarpur ...	Checha.
Athkkel ...	Supaha.	„ ...	Dhapalial.
Bakata ...	Fulbari.	„ ...	Khatpar.
„ ...	Gadapani.	„ ...	Shalkushi.
„ ...	Kathmohanta.	„ ...	Supaha.
Betbari ...	Katanipar.	Marabazar	Jakai.
„ ...	Kayaimora.	„ ...	Takawbari.
„ ...	Kuamara.	Nazira ...	Auguria.
„ ...	Kurekhona.	„ ...	Budbari.
„ ...	Shalkushi.	„ ...	Duramari.
„ ...	Sonari Charigaon.	Salaguri ...	Kaharpuria.
Dopdar ...	Chupaha.	„ ...	Shalaguri.
„ ...	Namati.	„ ...	Thukarial.
„ ...	Saru Bengena Ati.	Silakuti ...	Katani Namati.
Gadhuli bazar	Gazala Medhi.	„ ...	Naham Bapu.

List of Sattras—(contd.)

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattr.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattr.
	JORHAT SUBDIVI- SION. <i>Brahman Gosain.</i>		
Bahana ...	Adhar Sattr.	Salmara ...	Auniati.
" ...	Putiyari.	" ...	Bar Sakupora.
Baligaon ...	Barkotia.	" ...	Belusudhia.
" ...	Owa Sattr.	" ...	Botargoya.
Chaokhat ...	Adhar Sattr.	" ...	Dakhinpat.
" ...	Batargoya.	" ...	Garamur.
" ...	Defalu.	" ...	Karatipar.
" ...	Ghuriagoya.	" ...	Katanigaon.
" ...	Patiyari.	" ...	Matia Baria Puniar Sattr.
" ...	Phulbari.	" ...	Puniar Bar Sattr.
" ...	Siyalmar.	" ...	Puniar Maju Sattr.
Holongapar ...	Punia.	" ...	Puniar Na Sattr.
Jorhat tahsil ...	Baliporia.	" ...	Puniar Saru Sattr.
" ...	Jalkuria.	" ...	Saru Sakupora.
" ...	Kaisungia.	Simaluguri ...	Ratnakar.
" ...	Misimi.	Teok ...	Mahara.
" ...	Nachanipar.	" ...	Nepali.
" ...	Ratanpuria.	" ...	Pohardia.
Parbatia ...	Bardhapkota.		
" ...	Sarudhapkota.		
Salmara ...	Adhar Sattr.		

List of Sattras—(contd.)

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattra.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattra.
	JORHAT SUBDIVISION—(contd.) <i>Sudra Gosain.</i>		
Amguri ...	Gazala.	Jorhat Tahsil ...	Kathsattrra.
" ...	Kangsapara.	" ...	Koharporia.
" ...	Thokorial.	" ...	Komar Sattra.
Bahana ...	Letugaon.	" ...	Korekhona.
" ...	Madarguri.	" ...	Letagram.
" ...	Sawdkushi.	" ...	Letugram.
Baligaon ...	Leturgaon.	" ...	Modarguria.
Chaokhat ...	Bahjengoni.	" ...	Nachanipar.
" ...	Degholi.	" ...	Negoria.
" ...	Kangsapar.	" ...	Naharkotia.
" ...	Saringia.	" ...	Sessar Sattra.
" ...	Supaha.	" ...	Supaha.
Hexari ...	Bahbari.	" ...	Telpani.
" ...	Leturgoya.	Lahing ...	Dangdhora.
" ...	Srabani.	" ...	Kordaiguri.
Holongapar ...	Letugoya.	" ...	Thukubolia.
Jorhat Tahsil ...	Dholani.	Parbatia ...	Leturgaon.
" ...	Elengi.	" ...	Puranimati.
" ...	Gazala.	" ...	Silpotia.
" ...	Jurkota.	" ...	Srabani.

List of Sattras—(contd.)

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattr.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattr.
	JOHHAT SUBDIVI- SION—(concl'd.)		
	<i>Sudra Gosain.</i>		
Salmara ...	Bara Suk Saru Elengi.	Teok ...	Gazala.
" ...	Bengna Ati.	" ...	Koharpar.
" ...	Bhogpur.	" ...	Magurmora.
" ...	Bihimpuria.	" ...	Silkushi.
" ...	Degholi.	" ...	Supaha.
" ...	Dihing.	" ...	Ujanis
" ...	Dikhomukhia Elengi.		GOLAGHAT SUBDIVI- SION.
" ...	Kakarikota Bar Elengi.		<i>Brahman Gosain.</i>
" ...	Kamalabari.	Ahataguri ...	Adhar.
" ...	Kamjan Elengi.	" ...	Barhaipukhuri.
" ...	Matiabaria.	" ...	Beloguri.
" ...	Narasingha.	" ...	Nachanipar.
" ...	Porabheta Elengi.	" ...	Puranimati.
" ...	Samaguri Na Sattr.	" ...	Purtamia.
" ...	Samaguri Pura n Sattr.	Dakhinhengra,	Na-gosain.
" ...	Supaha.	Dhekial ...	Mahara.
" ...	Ulutalia.	" ...	Gaurang.
" ...		Gurjoganis ...	Madhu Mishra.
Simaluguri ...	Gazala.	Maukhua ...	Adhar.
" ...	Sesan Sattr.	Michamara ...	Adhar.

List of Sattras—(concl'd.)

Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattrā.	Name of mauza in which situated.	Name of Sattrā.
	GOLAGHAT SUBDI- VISION—(concl'd.) <i>Brahman Gosain.</i>		
Michamara ...	Chengaparia.	Athguon ...	Oaguri.
" ...	Kandali.	" ...	Ulutali.
" ...	Mukalimuria.	Dakhinbengra	Jakai.
" ...	Namati.	" ...	Kharangial.
" ...	Pahumaria.	" ...	Telpani.
" ...	Puranimati.	Dhekial ...	Leturgoya.
" ...	Thukarial.	" ...	Madaraguri.
Namdayang ...	Kurnabahi.	Ghiladhari ...	Alengi.
Rangamati ...	Mahara.	Gurjogania ...	Pukhuriparia.
	<i>Sudra Gosain.</i>	Marangi ...	Gazala.
Ahetaguri ...	Bali Bapu Goyan.	Michamara ...	Bihimpur.
" ...	Chakata.	" ...	Hatkuchi.
" ...	Chapari.	" ...	Kathar.
" ...	Halodhiati.	" ...	Kothiatolia.
" ...	Madararguri.	Namdayang ...	Checha.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulses—Fibres—Storage and threshing of grain—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Preparation of molasses—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Yield and value of crops—General remarks—Grazing—Livestock—Cattle disease—Protective embankments—Commencement of tea industry—The boom in the early sixties—Collapse in 1866—Expansion of the industry—Labour supply—Labour laws—Situation of tea gardens—Soil—Varieties of plant—System of cultivation—System of manufacture—Green tea—Outturn and prices—Forests—System of management—Situation of reserves and revenue they yield—List of important reserves.

**Crops
grown.**

The staple food crop of Sibsagar is rice, which in 1902-03 covered 63 per cent of the total cropped area of the district. Other important crops are tea (15 per cent), and orchard and garden crops (8 per cent). A large part of the area shown under the latter head is, however, occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Mustard occupied 4 per cent of the total cropped area, miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, 3 per cent, and sugarcane 1.5 per cent. Wheat barley, and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under these three crops in 1902-03 was

only 50 acres. A small quantity of maize is also grown by foreigners. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs. The area under different crops will be found in Table VII.

Rice falls under three main heads—*sali*, *ahu*, and *bao*, Rice. Sali. the proportion of the total rice area normally occupied by each of these three classes being—*sali* 92 per cent, *ahu* 7 per cent, and *bao* 1 per cent. *Sali* dhan, or transplanted winter rice, is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*kothiatoli*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times till the ground is reduced to a puddle, and is carefully manured with cowdung and sweepings. The proportion borne by the seedling beds to the area under transplanted rice varies from 4 to 10 per cent. This is due to the fact that in poor fields close transplanting, a span apart (*bigutiya*), is necessary. In ordinary good land the seedlings are usually a cubit apart (*hatiya*), while in exceptionally good soil they are sometimes placed the width of a fishing basket apart (*pulshchabiya*). The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is steeped in water for two or three days, allowed to germinate, and then sown broadcast over the bed in May and June. It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The

husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times, till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water, are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles (*akhi*) to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls (*muthi*), each of which contains four or five plants. It is usually the practice to steep the young plants in water for a day or two before they are planted out, and, unless they are weak and stunted, the tops are cut off at the time when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is generally carried out by women. The work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. In places where it is difficult to obtain labour to transport the seedlings the grain is sometimes steeped in water till it germinates and is then sown broadcast on the field. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. Women grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a

piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary, the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six to eight *muthis* form a *thor* or *jhap*, and five or six *thors* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biriya*, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main divisions, *lahi* and *bar*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *bar*, and, though the grain is of a finer quality, the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains, and which cannot therefore be cropped with the more productive *bar* dhan. Altogether there are said to be no less than 74 different varieties of *sali* dhan in the district.

Bao dhan is sown broadcast about the end of **Bao dhan.** February, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sali*, and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of December and is harvested in the same way as *sali*. The total area under *bao* is less than 2,000 acres and about half of this is grown in the Salmara mauza.

Ahu dhan also is usually sown broadcast, and is **Ahu dhan.** grown under two different sets of conditions. The greater part of the *ahu* raised is sown on the *chapolis*, or

high-riparian flats which fringe the Brahmaputra. The usual procedure is as follows :—

In May, the jungle is cut down and sometimes burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. If any jungle has sprung up in the interval it is cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojala kata*, and ploughing begins in January. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown, and the land again ploughed and harrowed, to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind (*botah boloah*) they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the middle of June. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if after this time the floods do not retire they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is often grown on the *chaparis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required when the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*), and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the reeds have been burned. After the third year it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clean the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site

the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes and silt for his next year's crop.

Nearly three-fourths of the *ahu* crop is raised on the Majuli, and most of the remainder is grown on the *chapolis* south of the Brahmaputra in the Jorhat and Golaghat subdivisions, *i. e.*, in the Chaokhat, Charigaon, Hezari, Rangamati, Michamara, and Namdayang mauzas. In the more densely settled portions of Jorhat the custom is gradually coming into vogue of taking a crop of *ahu* from land which is subsequently planted out with *sali*. This is, however, only done where the soil is fairly light, as a stiff and sticky clay is too hard to plough before the ground has been well moistened by the rain. *Ahu* is hardly grown at all in the Sibsagar subdivision.

A variety of transplanted rice called *ras* or *gethu* has Ras rice. been recently introduced into the district by Bengali coolies. It is grown near the homestead on the higher *rupit* lands, is transplanted and reaped rather earlier than *sali* and yields a particularly fine quality of grain. This rice has largely taken the place of transplanted *ahu*, of which there is very little in Sibsagar.

Mustard, as has already been said, is usually grown Mustard. in conjunction with *ahu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and, if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps are dug out, and the land is then ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the beginning of November, and the plant is

ready to be pulled from the field about the middle of February. It is generally left to dry for a few days, and is then threshed either in the field in a place prepared for the purpose or near the homestead. Mustard is generally grown in conjunction with summer rice (*ahu*), and about two-thirds of the total district crop is raised in the Majuli. A certain quantity is also grown in the *chapolis* of Jorhat and Golaghat; Baligaon and Hezari being the principal mustard mauzas of the former subdivision and Michamara and Rangamati of the latter. Mustard is seldom grown in the *sadr* subdivision of the district.

Pulses.

Pulse is usually grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra, in conjunction with summer rice and mustard, but a crop is often taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chapolis* if new land is taken up the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulse is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft, but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivator. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but, as the grains do not

separate readily from the pods, their efforts are supplemented by a man with a flail. Several different kinds of pulse are grown, but nine-tenths of the crop belong to the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo* Linn.), a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chapolis*. *Kala-mah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is grown but not in any considerable quantities. It has a large yield but does not fetch a high price. Another variety is the lentil *masur-mah* (*lens esculenta*) which is grown in the Majuli.

Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop. The **Fibres.** seeds are generally sown in April, and the plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use. Small patches of rhea (*bæhmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where it is heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

**Storage and
threshing of
grain.**

The grain is usually stored as it is brought from the field in an outhouse called *bhoral*, which, unlike the houses of the villagers, is raised on posts well above the level of the ground. When it is required for use the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *ku/a*. It is then jerked into the air and allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing the paddy is stored in huge drums called *mer*. They are made of split bamboo, and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung.

**Agricultural
implements.
The plough.**

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts—the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he

* An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, Director, Department of Land Records and Agriculture, showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes to thresh out $7\frac{1}{2}$ maunds of paddy.

makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs., and the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*doli mari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*ko-talis*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar and costs from Re. 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles (*kuchi*), with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased, and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation a large wooden rake (*bindha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dhaki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at

Other im-
plements.

the end, which is supported by two posts at about two-thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air ; the weight is then removed, and the pestle falls into a small mortar buried in the ground in which the grain is placed. The *dhaki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse, but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar (*ural*) and a pestle (*mari*). All of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is usually grown on high land near the village site, and, as the soil is poor, it has to be well manured with cowdung. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and, as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognized. The *maq* or white stands about seven feet high and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *teli* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. There are two varieties of *pura*, the purple or indigenous, and the white or Bengali. The latter is the larger and the more juicy of the two but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The *megela* is a hard and thin variety degenerated from the *maq* and is seldom cultivated. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch

is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dal (*cajanus indicus*), but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, though this troublesome precaution is occasionally neglected. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between. Harvesting goes on from January to April, and during the winter nights and in the foggy mornings the drone of the sugarcane mill is heard coming across the fields in nearly every part of the district where the "works of men" are to be seen.

The area under sugarcane in Sibsagar in 1902-03 was over 8,000 acres, which was nearly double the area returned from any other district in Assam Proper. It is grown in small patches in every part of the district, but the principal centre of the industry is the country lying on either side of the Golaghat-Naghereting road, which is included in the Maukhoa, Dhekial, Michamara, Naharani, and Gurjogania mauzas. The Panidihing mauza and the Jorhat tahsil are the only two revenue units in the Sibsagar and Jorhat subdivisions in which much cane is raised, as in the mauzas south of the Dhodar Ali the plant has been attacked by a malignant fungus.

**Preparation
of molasses.**

The native form of mill is still generally used for the extraction of the juice from sugarcane. It consists of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skilful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potter's clay. Two of these vessels are placed about nine feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition, it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*gholani*) shaped like a small dug out, and

is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues, the liquid loses its dark brown colour and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes, the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. The first-named factor is probably of most importance. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brahmaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *alatia*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bherbheria* and is particularly deep and soft. *Bherbheria* land is found at the lowest part of the rice basins and when enriched by the drainage from the village site is generally known as *charanpara*. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality, and are generally only found in the country lying at the foot of the Naga Hills. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptocorisa acuta*) and *charaha* (*hispa acussceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The

Causes
affecting
productive-
ness of land.

best remedy of all is to collect the insects by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon, as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *charaha* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks, and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying.* Smoking the fields also produces good results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Rain is wanted when *sali* rice is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *bao*. During every stage of its growth the plant is benefited by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Emphasis is laid on this necessity in the local proverb *tini haone pan ek ahine dhan*, which means that a pan vine that lasts for three years, and dhan which gets rain in Asvin (September 15th to October 15th) are both very profitable things. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

Garden
crops.
The plan-
tain.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are those known as *athia*, *monohar*, *chenichampa*, and

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris Green, 1 lb. freshly slaked lime or flour and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

malbhog. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat smaller tree, the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *chenichampa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead, where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure ; but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of water-logging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take from 18 months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn to fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution, distilled from the sheaths and the corm, is sometimes used in place of salt. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an

earthen pot, in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharpani*, is used as a spice, as a hair-wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.

Other
garden
crops.

The betel-nut (*areoa catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems, and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing, they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*chunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the

leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are spinach, *puroi* (*basella alba*), *lai*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*discorea*), and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos lablab*), the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*), the radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chuka sag* (*rumex vesicarius*), and the brinjal (*solanum melongena*). Potatoes are grown in the Majuli and in a few villages near the south bank of the Brahmaputra.

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary very materially in different parts of the district, and it is impossible to lay down any general average.

		lbs.	Yield and value of crops.
Sali ...	...	800	
Abu ...	...	750	
Mustard ...	...	550	
Molasses ...	...	2,200	

per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary very materially in different parts of the district, and it is impossible to lay down any general average.

Manure is not generally used except for garden crops and sugarcane, though, here and there, a raiyat is found with sufficient intelligence and industry to spread some cowdung on his rice fields. There is little tendency to

introduce new crops or to improve upon old methods, but the cultivation of potatoes is said to be slowly spreading, especially in the Michamara mauza, and in central Golaghat a little jute is grown. No efforts are made to improve the character of the crop beyond selecting the best grain for seed. Even this common sense precaution is occasionally mixed up with superstition, and seed is chosen because the plant from which it was taken was planted or reaped when the moon was on the wane.

Grazing.

Cattle are generally grazed on the high land between the rice fields, in swamps and marshes, where excellent pasture is to be obtained during the cold season, and on the stubble that remains after the crop is cut. In the district as a whole there is no doubt abundant grazing of a kind, but it is not always well distributed, and in places the villagers during the rains are hard pressed for fodder. The finest grazing is to be found on the Majuli and in the marshes which fringe the Brahmaputra, and it is here that the professional herdsmen keep their buffaloes. Certain areas have been reserved as grazing grounds by executive order, but rules for their reservation have not yet been framed, though in the more densely-settled portions of the district it would seem that they would not be entirely out of place. In these tracts, during the rains, cattle have sometimes to be sent to other villages to graze, or are stall fed on rice straw which has been previously collected for the purpose.

The buffaloes of Sibsagar belong to three main breeds, **Buffaloes.** the Assamese, the Nepalese, and the Bengali. The Assamese is the finest and largest of the three, and, in the more jungly parts of the district, the excellence of the breed is to some extent maintained by an infusion of wild blood, wild bulls associating with the herd and becoming the sires of many of the calves. The Nepalese buffaloes have shorter horns than the Assamese, and the Bengali is altogether a smaller and less imposing animal. An Assamese bull buffalo usually costs from Rs. 40 to Rs. 60, while a cow is from 10 to 15 rupees more. Bengali buffaloes of either sex are considerably cheaper than the Assamese. Pure bred Assamese buffaloes are unfortunately becoming scarce, and crosses between the three breeds are extremely common.

Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portions of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half-naked boy, whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides, and who guides it with a nose rope. In the *chuparis*, the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. The *mo-khutis*, as these grazing camps are called, are to be found in the jungle covered *chuparis* on either side of the Brahmaputra, and are especially numerous on the Majuli, where there are between sixty and seventy of them, and in the Thaura Panidihing mauza in the

extreme east of the district. They are usually kept by Nepalese who make a livelihood by selling milk and *ghi*. A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white and rich in fatty material, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years, during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth.

Cattle.

Half-starved, under-sized, ill-bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly perhaps in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. Grazing is not very plentiful in Sibsagar, the demand for cattle is considerable, and the price is higher than in Lower Assam. Cows generally cost from Rs.10 to Rs. 18 or even more, and bullocks fetch as a rule between Rs. 20 and Rs. 30.

Goats and sheep and ponies.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At

night they are usually shut up in a small out-house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform as a protection against jackals. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, the animals imported do not thrive, and the total number in the district is but small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, endurance, or stamina. European residents are compelled to obtain their horses fresh from Calcutta. A census of live stock was taken in 1904 and disclosed the following results: Bulls and bullocks 132,000, cows 101,000, bull-buffaloes 25,000 cow-buffaloes 23,000, young stock 164,000, sheep 1,000, and goats 72,000.

The most common forms of cattle disease are foot and mouth disease (*chapka*), rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea (*marki*), cholera, *matikhoa*, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight. A veterinary surgeon, whose headquarters are at Mariani, is entertained by the district Local Boards.

In every district in the Assam Valley there are extensive tracts which are exposed to the floods of the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, but nowhere has the subject of flood protection been a matter of such vital interest as in the *sadr* subdivision of Sibsagar. This is partly due to the fact that the population of the district is beginning to press upon the soil, partly to the fact that

Cattle disease.

Flood protection; work carried out by Ahoms and by British prior to 1901.

the unlimited supply of labour at the disposal of the Ahom Rajas enabled them to protect the farms of the people living in the vicinity of the capital. The floods come not only from the Brahmaputra itself, but from the Dihing, Disang, Dikho and their tributaries. A very complete system of embankments was constructed in the days of native rule. The Dihing, the Dikho, the Disang, and the Dimau and Dirai, two smaller streams which fall into the Disang, were all protected, and there was a large bund along the south bank of the Brahmaputra. For a short time after our assumption of the administration of Assam these bunds were maintained by the District Officer, but, with the disappearance of the system of enforced labour, it was found impossible to keep them in repair. In 1888, the Deputy Commissioner called attention to the damage wrought by flood, and work was begun on the Dihing, Disang, Dikho, and Darika bunds and on the Dhai Ali. The total expenditure on the construction and maintenance of these embankments up to September 1901 was Rs. 1,27,000.

**Work done
since 1902.**

In 1902, the whole question came once more under the consideration of the Administration, and a committee was appointed, who were directed to enquire into the matter and to prepare a scheme for the approval of the Chief Commissioner. Work was begun in 1903-04, and the following was the condition of affairs at the end of 1904. The total expenditure on these works up to the end of December 1904 was about Rs. 3,07,000.

Dikho River.—A bund $15\frac{1}{4}$ miles in length with a top width varying from 12 to 6 feet, had been constructed

along the right bank from the point where the Assam-Bengal Railway crosses the Ramani Ali to the Tax Ali. On the left bank a bund 10 miles long had been constructed from a point about three-quarters of a mile above the place where the railway crosses the river. During the rains of 1904, the Dikho over-topped its banks and more than a quarter of a lakh of rupees was spent during the following cold weather in strengthening the bunds.

Dihing river.—A bund 6 feet wide at the top had been constructed for a length of 44 miles along the left bank to the Shalaguri Ali. The greater part of this embankment lies, however, in the district of Lakhimpur.

Disang river.—A bund 19 miles long, with a top width of from 4 to 6 feet, had been constructed along the left bank of the river from the Shalaguri Ali.

Gosaingaon Suti and Kakila river.—A bund had been constructed along the left bank from Gosaingaon, 5 miles down stream, to Naihatiagaon, and 7 miles up stream to meet the Ladoigarh.

Bhogdoi.—There are bunds on either side of the river which start from about one mile above the point where it is crossed by the trunk road, and terminate about two miles below it.

Reference must now be made to the tea industry which has done so much for the development of Sibsagar. Commence-
ment of tea
industry.

* Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from —

(1) Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal No. XXXVII. Papers relating to tea cultivation in Assam. Calcutta, 1861.

(2) Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of Tea Cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Sylhet. Calcutta, 1868.

(3) Papers regarding Tea Industry in Bengal. Calcutta, 1873.

The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had been engaged in trade in the Province while it was still under native rule, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gun boats in 1824. In 1834, a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their members, Doctors Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths, to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were established, a small establishment was entertained under the general management of Mr. Bruce to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea and cultivate them when discovered, and plants and seed were brought to Assam from China. Tea-makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and in the following year some of the manufactured product was sent to England and met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which at the present day seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid ranging from 16 s. to £ 1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1-10½ d. to 2s. a lb.

**First
beginning in
Sibsagar;**

The first plantation in Sibsagar was situated near Jaipur, and, in 1840, was transferred by Government to the Assam Company. Too much stress was at that time laid on the necessity of cultivating the plant in the

localities in which it was found growing wild in the forests, establishments were maintained on a too lavish scale, and in 1847 shares in the Assam Company, on which £ 20 had been paid up, are said to have been sold for half a crown apiece. Economies were, however, effected in the management, and by 1852 the affairs of the Company had been placed on a more satisfactory footing. In 1859, they had nearly 3,400 acres under cultivation in the district which yielded about 700,000 lbs. of tea, the largest garden being situated at Lingri Pukhuri, which is now amalgamated with Mezenga.

The only other gardens in which at that time any tea was manufactured were Cinnamara, which was owned by Mr. Williamson, Nakachari owned by Mr. Todd, and Neghereting owned by Mr. Spears.*

The two former had been opened in 1854, and the latter in 1853. Twelve other plantations had been opened, but had not yet begun to yield an outturn. Of these four, Bengnakhoa, Oating, Ghiladhari, and Singlo, were owned by Mr. Williamson, while Holongapar and Debrapar were the property of Mr. Todd.†

The total area under cultivation in the district, which at that time was bounded on the west by the Dhansiri, was 5,227 acres with an outturn of 846,000 lbs. of tea.

* It must be borne in mind that at this time a portion of the present Golaghat subdivision was included in Nowgong.

Numaligarh which passed into the hands of the Jorhat Tea Company about this time yielded 48,000 lbs. of tea in 1859, and there was a small outturn obtained from Punkah.

† The expression used in the return is 'planter', but this apparently connotes ownership.

**The boom in
the early
Sixties.**

1859 to 1863 was a period of steady but not abnormal or unwholesome expansion. In the latter year the possibility of making large fortunes out of tea attracted the attention of the speculating classes; and tea planting passed through a severe crisis, which was entirely due to the action of Company promoters, who endeavoured to make money, not by manufacturing tea, but by hastily opening gardens to be sold at most exorbitant prices to the credulous investor. The promulgation of the fee simple rules of 1861, was followed by a rush for land, which was aggravated by the orders of the Board of Revenue, who authorised District Officers to sell estates on a pen and ink sketch made by the applicant, before they had been properly surveyed and demarcated. Land thus obtained was hastily cleared of jungle, a few plants, the majority of which soon died, were hurriedly put out, and the place was sold to the unsuspecting public as a flourishing tea garden. To such a pitch was this procedure carried that there is one case on record in which a manager received instructions from London to clear and plant a certain area of waste land for delivery to a Company to whom it had been already sold as a tea plantation.

**Heavy
mortality in
the Sixties.**

In spite of the high prices offered, local labour was not obtainable in sufficient quantities, and coolies, generally of the most miserable description, were sent up from Calcutta. The mortality in the depôts and on the journey was appalling. In the four years 1864 to 1867, the annual mortality in the largest depôt ranged from 36 to 115 per cent. of the average daily strength; the latter enormous

rate being calculated on a daily average of no less than 458 souls.* Between 1863 and 1868, 54,352 coolies were imported to Assam, 1,712 of whom died *en route*, which is equivalent to a death rate of about 40 per cent. per annum as the journey occupied on the average less than a month. Even when the garden was reached, the mortality was generally high, and was sometimes quite appalling. In the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of tea cultivation, details are given for seven gardens in Upper Assam, on which the recorded mortality for half the year only in 1865 ranged from 16 to 39 per cent. The returns submitted were declared by the Commissioners to be unsatisfactory, but in 1866, 4,366 deaths were recorded in Upper Assam, which was equivalent to a death rate of 180 per mille on the total number remaining plus the total number of deaths. These days of high mortality have happily now passed away, and in 1902-03, the mortality amongst adult coolies in Sibsagar was only 26 per mille.

During the tea boom large sums were paid for labour and for seed, land which was little better than jungle ^{Collapse in 1866.} was sold for preposterous prices, and the tea companies which were formed under these unfavourable conditions soon collapsed. 1866, 1867, and 1868 were years of great depression. Mr. A. C. Campbell, in a note written in 1873, describes how young men who had been engaged in England, were turned adrift when the collapse came "in a most inhospitable country without a penny or a friend ; some died, others had literally to beg their way

* Report of the Commissioners, p. 28.

out of Assam, most had to regret impaired constitutions, and all the loss of some of the best years of their life." In 1869, affairs began to take a more favourable turn. It was seen that properly managed gardens could be worked at a satisfactory profit and that the estates of the bubble companies which had been bought for small prices after the great crash were doing well in the hands of their new owners. Since 1870, there has been an enormous expansion of the industry, and while the area under cultivation and the outturn have alike increased, the cost of production and the price obtained have steadily diminished. Like other industries, tea has experienced periods of prosperity and depression, but there has been no such boom with its inevitable collapse as occurred in the early sixties.

**Expansion of
the industry.**

In 1872, there were 11,290 acres under mature plant which yielded 3,200,000 lbs. of tea. The corresponding figures ten years later were 35,219 acres of plant and 11,337,000 lbs. of tea. By 1891 the outturn had risen to 20,465,000 lbs. and it continued to increase fairly steadily till in 1900 it was as much as 29,017,000 lbs. The industry was at that time suffering from the effects of over production, recourse was had to a system of finer plucking and the following year saw a decrease in the production of over 2,000,000 lbs. Statistics for later years will be found in Table VII.

**Labour
supply.**

There is hardly any local labour available for employment on the plantations, and coolies have to be brought from the other parts of India. In the ten years ending with 1890 the number so imported was 76,041

and in the following decade it rose to 121,593. The largest number imported in any year was in 1897, when 21,725 persons were brought up to the district.

The abstract in the margin shows the areas from which

	Number.	Percentage.	the labour force in 1901
Total ...	147,532		had been recruited. A
Assam ...	38,526	26	considerable proportion of
Chota Nagpur ...	57,728	39	those born in Assam are
Other parts of Bengal.	26,582	18	the children of immigrant
United Provinces,	2,038	1	coolies.
Central Provinces,	16,186	11	
Madras ...	3,730	3	

The journey from the recruiting districts is trouble- **Labour laws.**
some and expensive, the class of persons capable of working successfully in the damp climate of Assam is limited, and of recent years the supply of labour available has not been sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the planters. Special Acts have been passed to regulate the relations between the employers and their labour force. Careful provision is made for the welfare of the coolie. He is housed in neat and comfortable lines, usually far superior to the dwellings occupied by persons of that class outside the gardens, he is provided with an excellent water supply, generally drawn from masonry wells and tanks, and when sick, he is cared for in a comfortable hospital by a native doctor working under the supervision of a European medical man. The provision of all these comforts and the importation of the labourers themselves cost large sums of money, which no one would be willing to expend without some guarantee that the coolies, when imported,

would consent to remain on the plantation. This protection is afforded by the law (Act VI of 1901) which lays down that a labourer, provided that he is well-treated, must not leave the garden to which he is indentured before the expiry of his contract, unless he chooses to redeem it by a money payment. Act XIII of 1859 is also freely used. Under this Act a labourer who has taken an advance on the understanding that he will complete a piece of work, is liable to imprisonment if he fails to fulfil his contract after he has been ordered to do so by a Magistrate.

**Situation of
tea gardens.**

The tea gardens are scattered all over the central and southern portions of the district. Only a few lie west of the river Dhansiri, and there are none north of the Brahmaputra. The greater number are to be found in a belt of high land stretching along the railway line from the Kamarbund-Ali to the boundary of Lakhimpur.

Further information with regard to the area, site, and population of each garden in the district will be found in Statement A in the Appendix.

Soil.

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land, which in its natural state is covered with tree forest, is usually considered the most suitable, but excellent gardens have also been planted out on ordinary grass land.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised—^{Varieties of plant.} Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to $7\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length by $2\frac{3}{8}$ to $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width; the Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety; Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide; and the Naga indigenous, which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety.

Seed from the Singlo, Barzeloni, and Taokak gardens is generally considered to be of exceptionally good quality. The price varies largely in accordance with the demand, and of recent years has ranged from Rs.150 a maund in 1897 to Rs.40 a maund in 1903.

**System of
cultivation.**

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground.* Transplanting goes on during May and June if six months old plants are put out, but as this involves keeping a clearance hoed during the rains, some managers prefer putting out their clearances with one year old plants in December and January, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life, little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth, and sometimes even lower. In the third year the plants can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year, only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning, and any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. As an extreme remedy, old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over 7 or 8 times, in order to render the soil permeable to rain water and to keep down the jungle. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the lower strata, and to kill the weeds

* Some managers only shade the plants in unusually dry seasons.

It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes in temperature. Of recent years various manures have been coming into use. Oil cake and cowdung are sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is occasionally top-dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view.

Plucking begins in March and April and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks' time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a "flush," and there are usually six or seven full flushes, in a season; though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The Pests and Blights of the Tea Plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta, 1903.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory, it is spread out in thin layers on trays or *changs* and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 16 to 18 hours, but if it is cold and wet, 24 to 30 hours may elapse before the leaf is ready. When the leaf has

System of
manufac-
ture.

been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf.

Rolling takes from 30 to 45 minutes, and after this the leaf is placed in a cool room for from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe, and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass, are orange pekoe, broken pekoe, pekoe, souchong, and fannings. After the tea has been sorted it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead-lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

Green tea.

Of recent years an attempt has been made to introduce the manufacture of green tea in order to meet the demands of the American market. In 1902, the Indian

Tea Association offered a bounty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ annas on every pound of green tea manufactured. The following year this bounty was reduced by half, and nearly 15,000 lbs. of green tea were exported from Sibsagar. The principal difference between the manufacture of green and black tea is that the former article is not fermented. As soon as the leaf comes in it is steamed in a drum for about half a minute, a process which turns it a bright green colour, and effectually stops all fermentation. Excess moisture is then removed by a hydro-extractor or centrifugal machine, and it is then rolled, fired, and sorted into the following different grades, Pinhead gunpowder, Gun powder, Young Hyson, Hyson No. I, Hyson No. II, Twanky and Dust. The infused leaf should be of a bright green colour, and the liquor of a very pale yellow shade. Most of this tea is sent to North America, but a small quantity is sold in the midland counties of England.

The character of the outturn depends largely upon the season, but still more upon the garden and the system of manufacture followed. In 1868, the Commissioners estimated that the average outturn was about 240 lbs. per acre, but this estimate was probably too low as the average yield in Sibsagar during the five years ending with 1903 was 375 lbs. per acre. The introduction of machinery, and the improvement of the general system of cultivation and management, have rendered it possible to effect a large reduction in the cost of the tea when placed upon the market. In 1868, it was calculated that

**Outturn and
prices.**

tea must be sold at 2s. a lb. to yield a profit. Twenty years later the average price obtained by tea from the Brahmaputra Valley was 8 annas 2 pies, and though in 1894 it rose to 10 annas 5 pies, in 1898 it dropped to 6 annas 9 pies and, except in 1902, has since remained below that figure.

Forests.

The forests of Sibsagar fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which in 1902-03 covered an area of 876 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which in the same year occupied the enormous area of 2,839 square miles. Unclassed state forest is, however, simply Government waste land and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy chur, or a huge expanse of low-lying land covered with high grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land which has been resigned by its former holder and has not yet been settled with any other person, or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, *i.e.*, actual tree forest. A considerable proportion of the unclassified state forests of the district are situated in the Mikir Hills, where they are *ghumed* over by the Mikirs.

**System of
manage-
ment.**

The management of the reserved forests is generally entrusted to a Deputy or Assistant Conservator, but the unclassified state forests are under the immediate control of the local revenue officials. Royalty is realized on forest produce removed for purposes of trade, but the villagers are allowed to take from unclassified state forests all that is needed for their own requirements free of royalty.

The statement annexed to this chapter gives, in a condensed form, details with regard to the situation, area, trade routes, and market centres for each of the reserved forests in the district, which cover an area of more than ten square miles. These reserves consist of dense evergreen forest and as yet have only been partially explored. There is one small forest at Holongapar near Jorhat, and four in the east of the Sibsagar subdivision ; but more than seven-eighths of the total area is situated in the Mikir Hills and the valleys of the Dhansir and the Doiang, where the Nambar and the adjoining reserves form a compact mass covering over 600 square miles of territory. Since the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway some attempt has been made to exploit the resources of these forests. Nahor (*mesua ferrea*) found in close proximity to the railway line has been converted into sleepers. A saw mill has been established at Bokajan, which cuts up simul and other soft wood for tea boxes, and nahor, ajhar, and other hard varieties for sleepers and scantlings ; but the trade in timber is not yet of much importance. Table VIII shows the receipts obtained from each reserve. The only forests from which any appreciable quantity of revenue is at present obtained are the Nambar, the Disai, and the Disai valley, and the latter is actually situated in the Naga Hills. The reserves of Golaghat, exclusive of the Nambar, cover an area of 393 square miles, but during the three years ending with 1902-03 they produced an average gross revenue of less than Rs. 500 per annum. There is a second saw mill in the district situated at Garamur, but it

Situation of
the reserves
and revenue
they yield.

obtains most of its timber from unclassified state forests.

**Rates of
royalty and
most
valuable
timber tree.**

For timber required for sale royalty is paid at the rate of Rs.6 for each reserved tree or 4 annas a cubic foot whichever is less, while for unreserved trees the rate is one anna a cubic foot with a maximum of Rs. 2 for the tree. The most valuable timber trees in the district, all of which fall in the category of reserved trees, are nahor (*mesua ferrea*), ajhar (*lagerstrœmia flos reginæ*), uriam (*bischoffia javanica*), titasapa (*michelia champaca*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), poma (*cedrela toona*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), amari (*amoora spectabilis*), gomari (*gmelina arborea*), paroli (*stereospermum chelonoides*), khakan (*duahanga soneratioides*) and koroï (*albizzia procera*). The most important second class trees are simul (*bombax malabaricum*), hollock (*terminalia bicolorata*), hollong (*dipterocarpus bondii*), hingori (*castanopsis rufescens*) and hillika (*terminalia citrina*). Large logs are generally dragged by elephants to the nearest river and floated down to the place where they are required. Building timber, scantlings, and sleepers are frequently sawn up in the forest and thence conveyed by coolies to the nearest cart road. Agar (*aquilaria agalocha*) is found in small quantities in the forests bordering on the Naga Hills. Cane is found both there and on the Majuli, but the receipts under this head are comparatively small. The principal source of forest revenue in the district is the royalty paid by traders. Details with regard to the receipts and expenditure of the department will be found in Table IX.

List of reserved forests covering an area of ten square miles or more.

Name of reserve.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in square miles.	Date of constitution.	Names of valuable timber trees.	Routes of extraction.
Mikir Hills ...	North central portion of the Mikir Hills. Hilly and rocky. Soil, sandy loam.	81	1873	Nahor, Gunserai, Amari, Poma, Titasapa, Am and Hillika.	Not worked at present. The Kaliani river might perhaps be used.
Kaliani ...	North-east portion of the Mikir Hills on both sides of the Kaliani river. Hilly and rocky. Soil, sandy loam.	81	1887	Nahor, Paroli, Sam, Hillika, Hollock, Am Hingori, and Bhela.	Kaliani river to Numaligarh.
Nambar ...	On both sides of the Dhansiri river, between Mikir Hills and Naga Hills. Plains and low hills. Soil, principally a sandy loam.	387	1878	Nahor, Ajhar, Uriam, Titasapa, Sam, Poma, Gunserai, Amari, Gomari, Paroli, Khan, Koro, Hollock, and Hollong.	Assam-Bengal Railway which passes through forest.
Diphu ...	Between the Diphu and Dhansiri rivers and Bokajan. Plains undulating in places. Soil, sandy loam.	66	1887	Ajhar, Uriam, and Hollock.	Diphu and Dhansiri rivers to the Assam-Bengal Railway near Bokajan.
Rengma ...	Right bank of the Rengma river at the foot of the Naga Hills. Slightly undulating plains. Soil, sandy loam.	66	1887	Ajhar, Uriam, and Hollock.	Down the Rengma and Doiang rivers to Jamuguri.

List of reserved forests covering an area of ten square miles or more—(concl.)

Name of reserve.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in square miles.	Date of constitution.	Names of valuable timber trees.	Routes of extraction.
Doiang ...	Between the Doiang river and the Naga Hills. Plains slightly undulating in parts. Soil, sandy loam.	95	1888	Ajhar, Uriam, Hollock and a little Nahor.	The Golaghat Wokha road and the Doiang and Kakadanga rivers to Golaghat or Mokrong.
Disai ...	On the right bank of the Disai river at the foot of the Naga Hills. Low hills. Soil, sandy loam.	11	1883	Nahor, Ajhar, Titasapa, Sam, Poma, Gunserai, Amari, Khakan, Hollock, Hollong and Hingori.	The Disai river and the Mokochung road to the Assam-Bengal Railway line.
Abhaipur ...	Between the Safrai and Taokak rivers at the foot of the Naga Hills. Northern portion level, rest low hills. Soil, sandy loam.	26	1881	Ajhar, Nahor, Sam, Uriam and Poma.	The Safrai river to the Assam-Bengal Railway.
Panidithing ...	On the right bank of the Dimau river. Plains. Soil, loam and clay.	30	1894	Ajhar, only valuable tree found in any quantity.	Dimau and Disang rivers to the Brahmaputra.
Diroi ...	On the left bank of the Diroi river. Plains. Soil, loam and clay.	18	1881	Nahor and Ajhar	Diroi and Disang rivers to the Brahmaputra.

CHAPTER V. INDUSTRIES.

Arts and manufactures—Pat silk—Muga—Eri silk—Weaving—
Pottery—Brass and bell-metal—Mat-making—The fishing industry—Jewellery.

Apart from tea, the industries of Sibsagar are not of much importance. They include the rearing of the lac insect and of silk worms, the manufacture of rough earthenware and metal vessels and jewellery, with mat-making and weaving.

Three different kinds of silk are produced in the district. The most valuable kind is known as *pas* and is obtained from the cocoon of two species of worms, the univoltine or *bar polu* (*bombyx textor*) and the multi-voltine or *horu polu* (*bombyx cræsi*). Both kinds are reared in-doors, on the leaves of the mulberry tree (*morus indica*). The eggs of the *bar polu* take ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the beginning of January. The life of the worm lasts from thirty to forty days, and the cocoon takes about six days to spin. The cocoons are of a bright yellow colour, but the silk, when boiled in potash water, becomes perfectly white. From twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are required to yield one pound of thread, which is worth from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12. The thread obtained from the *horu polu* is not so valuable as that of the *bombyx textor*, but as the worm yields four broods in the

year it finds greater favour with the cultivators. *Pat* silk is as a rule only made to order, and the total quantity produced is small. From 250 lbs. to 350 lbs. of this silk are said to be produced in the Marabazar and Salaguri mauzas of the Namtidol tahsil. The costliness of the silk is due to several causes. The worms are very delicate, the period of incubation is a long one, and the amount of thread obtained from each cocoon is small. The supply of mulberry leaves is limited, and the feeding of the worms in-doors entails some trouble. Lastly the *pat* worm is looked upon as impure, and its cultivation is restricted to the lowly Katanis. They in their turn are naturally not disposed to extend an industry which in itself is an indication of the humble position of its followers.

Muga.

The *muga* worm (*antheræa assamæa*) is generally fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*). Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but in the Sibsagar district the only broods commonly reared are the *katia* in October-November, the *jarua* in December-February and the *jethua* in the spring. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males, who are allowed to remain free. Each female produces about 250 eggs, which are generally placed in a dark place, and when the worms appear they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plantain leaves is fastened round the trunk to prevent

them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the forefinger. In colour it is green, with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin, they descend the tree, and are then removed to the house and placed on bunches of withered leaves. Large quantities of *muga* silk are produced in Sibsagar, and *muga* silk cloths form the holiday attire of practically all, and the every-day dress of a very large number of the village women. The worm is reared in every part of the district, but the silk produced is generally required for home use and is not offered for sale. The villages on either side of the Jhanzi river and the Naharani mauza in Golaghat are especially noted for the production of this silk. The silk is reeled from the cocoon. The price obtained varies from four to six annas per oz.

The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *Eri silk*. *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*), on which it is usually fed. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year ; those which spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As with the *muga* moth, the females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males, who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take

from a week to 15 days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown, they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun, not reeled off. Before this is done the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread. The *eri* industry is not as important in Sibsagar as it is in Lower Assam, owing to the extensive cultivation of the *muga* worm, and comparatively little *eri* cloth is produced for sale. The worm is not considered impure by any caste except the Brahmins.

**Cost of Silk
cloths.**

The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bar kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats. Women's clothes, both petticoats and the shawls worn over the bust, are however usually made of *muga* silk, the thread required for a complete dress costing from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7. Some of the articles made of *pat* silk are very beautifully embroidered, and a woman's dress in this

material may cost as much as Rs. 180. The instruments used for twisting and weaving silk are the same as those employed for cotton, but for *eri* thread a stronger reed is employed.

The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is **Pottery** well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves, the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel, and the stacking of them in the kiln form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are—the wheel (*chak*), which is about three feet in diameter and rotates on a piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, moulds (*athali*) of different sizes, the mallet (*baliya piteni*), and the polisher (*chaki*).

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*charu*), cups (*mola*), water jars (*kalah*, *takeli* and *thali*), and

larger vessels (*hari*), with lamps, pipes and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry are at various *kumargaos* or "potters" villages in the Teok, Salmara, Hezari and Garamur mauzas in the Jorhat subdivision; at Golaghat; and in the Dhekial, Dergaon, Athgaon, Rangamati and Gurjogania mauzas in the Golaghat subdivision.

Brass and
Bell-metal.

The brass and metal industry is not of much importance. Its principal centres are in the Namdayang and Dopdar mauzas in the *sadr* subdivision; in the Salmara, Titabar, Charaibahi and Kakajan mauzas in Jorhat; and in the Kacharihat mauza and Golaghat town in the Golaghat subdivision. The number of people supported by the industry is small, and in Jorhat, at any rate, it is said that it is only practised as a subsidiary occupation to agriculture. Bell-metal utensils are usually cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal, which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*), hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, and borax is then smeared over the

join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*, *bati*), jars for holding water (*kalah*, *gagari*), trays (*sarai*), boxes to carry betelnut and lime (*tema*, *temi*) and large vessels used for boiling rice (*jaka*).

The weaving of cotton cloths in the villages is still **Weaving.** very generally carried on, but there are signs of a gradual tendency to wear imported fabrics, which are fairly cheap and save the women trouble. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, the material employed is almost invariably imported yarn, which is obtained in the requisite shades from the village shop. The loom consists of four stout posts which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5' 10" $\times$ 2' 6", and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system of manufacture followed, are described in the minutest detail in a "Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam" published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are, however, at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. Those curious on the subject would do well to consult this monograph, in which the whole subject is discussed with an elaboration and detail which would be quite unsuitable in a gazetteer. The total cost of the whole apparatus is about ten rupees,

and, as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very little cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that weaving, as an industry, is commercially a failure ; the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are large sheets or shawls worn as wraps, called *chadar* or *bar kapor*, and smaller shawls, called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called *paridia kapor* is very finely made and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200. The clothing of the women is almost always made at home and consists of a plain petticoat *mekhla* and a species of scarf *riha* worn over the bust. These garments are, however, often made of silk.

Mats.

Mats are of three kinds : *dhari* which are made from strips of *jati* bamboo, *patis* which are made of the *patidoia* reed (*maranta dichotoma*), and *katn* which are made of *gogul* and *mutha* (*cyperus rotundus*). *Patís* are generally made by Ahoms and a section of the Kewats who are called *Patíyas* and are considered to be slightly inferior to the other members of the caste. They are smooth and cool, and are sometimes boiled in a solution of potash to give them a light blue appearance. They are generally made in the Bakata mauza in the Sibsagar subdivision, the Salmara and Hezari mauzas in Jorhat, and the Ahata-guri mauza in the Golaghat subdivision, and cost from As. 6 to As. 12. *Dharis* are manufactured in most parts of the

district and are very cheap. *Kath* mats are made on the Majuli and cost three or four annas each. Other articles of wickerwork manufactured by the villagers are sieves (*salonis*), baskets in which clothes are kept (*jopa*), other baskets (*pasi*), winnowing fans (*kula*), large receptacles for storing grain (*dhuli*), and hats (*jhapi*). These hats are made of the *tokow* leaf (*livistonia jenkinsiana*) on a framework of split bamboo, and are often decorated with coloured pompons and strips of cloth. They are generally about two feet in diameter, but if intended to be used as sun shades for priests or ladies, they may be as much as five feet in diameter. Decorated *jhapis* are known as *sarudoia* and are generally worn either by Muhammadan women or by Nadiyals and Brittal-Baniyas. The ordinary *jhapi* for common use is known as *khorua*, but women sometimes wear a kind called *ruidengia* which is made of pieces of split bamboo. In the Namtidol tahsil there is a section of the Chutiya caste whose principal occupation is *jhapi* making, and who are called in consequence *jhapihajia*, and the same name is applied to a section of the Ahoms in the Jorhat subdivision. The best hats are made in the Jhapihajia village in the Dopdar mauza, another village of the same name in the Lahing mauza, and the Mahimelia village in the Ghiladhari mauza.

The fishing industry is of considerable importance in Sibsagar. Every villager catches fish for his own use, but fishing on a commercial scale is restricted to the Nadiyals. Of these there were 23,000 in 1901, all of whom

The fishing industry.

are to a certain extent supported by the produce of their nets, though probably only about one-third are fishermen pure and simple. The right of fishing the more important rivers and *bils* is every year put up to auction, and, in 1902-03, fetched no less a sum than Rs. 35,500. Figures for subsequent years will be found in Table XIV.

The auction purchaser, who is almost invariably a Nadiyal, makes his own arrangements with the fishermen. In the case of *bils* it is said that he takes three-fourths or four-fifths of the fish, when the catch is large, but only one-half when the *bil* is becoming exhausted. In the case of rivers he assesses a certain amount on each of the fishing villages along the bank. The most important fisheries, after the Brahmaputra, are in the Sibsagar subdivision, the Darika river, the Dilih, Garijan, the Jaradhara Rangapani, the Napukhri and Bhatiapar tanks, and the Mitang *bil*. In Jorhat they are the Dilbili, Kakadanga, and Kakila rivers, the Molow, Padumoni, and Raboi *bils*, the Kakohikata *bil*, the Teok Taptapi, and the Kharupatiajan. In Golaghat the Dhansiri river and the Mihi Kaluma and Gela *bils* bring in a considerable revenue. There is no trade in dried or salt fish, but fresh fish is sent from the Brahmaputra down the Jorhat State Railway into the interior.

Nets used.

The following are the nets most commonly in use: (1) *Ghakata*, a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water and is generally used to catch *butchua* fish. (2) *Khewali* a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached while all round the edges there

are weights. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides of the net together. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank. The following names are applied to this net as the mesh decreases in size, *sayani*, *pachani*, *afalia*, *angtha*, and *ghanjal*. (3) *Langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven toward^s the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *tenga langi* is a smaller variety, the two ends of which are brought round to form a circle as the net is not long enough to reach across the river. (4) *Parangi*, a square net the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout pole to which the bamboos are attached and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. Various wickerwork traps are also used. The *polo* resembles a gigantic wine glass with a short stem made of wickerwork. It is generally used by women, who walk through shallow water and keep pressing the rim on the mud at the bottom. Any fish that are caught are removed through an opening at the top. The *juluki* is a smaller kind of *polo*. The *jakai* is a species of wickerwork shovel which, like the *polo*, is generally used by women. They place the broad end of the shovel on the ground before them, and trample up the mud so as to drive the small fry into it. Conical bamboo traps which are called *dingaru*, *thupa*, *sepa*, and *gui* and are worked on the principle of the lobster pot, are placed in small streams or running water near the rice fields.

**Jewellery
and lac.**

Jorhat is noted for its jewellery and enamelling. The ornaments are generally made of thin gold leaf and enamel set with cheap rubies and emeralds. The jewellery of Jorhat is described at length in a Monograph on the Gold and Silver Wares of Assam, published at the Shillong Secretariat Press in 1905. Lac is raised by the Mikirs in the hills, but the total quantity exported from the district is said to be very small.

CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE,
COMMUNICATIONS, TRADE, TOWNS AND LOCAL
BOARDS.

Rents—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Economic condition of the people—Conventional restrictions—Communications—Development of steam navigation—Railways—Roads—Rivers—Post and telegraph offices—Commerce and trade—Markets—Towns—Local Boards.

From the statement in the margin it will be seen that **Rents.**

Group.	Percentage of settled area sublet.	less than 7 per cent of the
Western Golaghat	... 8.5	total settled area of the dis-
Central	... 8.2	trict for which statistics have
Southern Jorhat	... 10.3	been collected is sublet.
Central	... 10.0	The proportion of land held
Northern	... 6.4	by tenants is fairly high in
North-Western Sibsagar	... 3.73	
South Western	... 6.23	
Eastern	... 6.13	

Western Golaghat, and Central and Southern Jorhat, but is insignificant in Central Golaghat and Eastern and North-Western Sibsagar. The rents exacted are usually in cash and not in kind, and the rate charged very frequently does not exceed the Government revenue on the land, the owner deriving his profit from the assistance which the tenant is required by custom to afford him in cultivating the fields which he retains under his own management. The highest rates charged are those in Central Jorhat, which is the most densely populated portion of the district, where landlords generally ask and

obtain about Rs. 2 a *bigha*. Even here only 6 per cent of the total area settled at full rates is sublet, and the great mass of the tenants are either garden coolies who supplement their earnings from labour by cultivation, or landholders who have not sufficient land of their own to meet their wants.

Produce rents are of two kinds. In one case the landlord takes half the crop, in the other he takes a certain fixed amount irrespective of the total yield. Where the latter system is in force the amount taken is generally equivalent to a cash rent of from Rs. 2 to Rs. 2-8 per *bigha*.

There was a considerable increase in the number of tenants at the last census, the number, including their dependants, having risen from 9,900 in 1891 to 21,500 in 1901. A considerable proportion of these persons are, however, Assamese who occupy the land held by the great *sattras* at privileged rates, and whose position does not materially differ from that of the ordinary raiyat. There are in fact no signs at present of the growth of a landless class or of there being any danger of rack renting. Coolies who are still working on a tea garden are willing to pay more or less fancy rents for land in the vicinity, but this slight enhancement of the rent is of little importance in comparison with the profits they obtain from hiring out their labour in their leisure hours. Low land on tea estates is generally leased out by garden managers to their coolies, as the possession of a small area of rice land helps to keep the labour force contented and attaches them to the garden.

In spite of the existence of a considerable number of **Wages.** ex-garden coolies who are not debarred from working by any social considerations, labour is said to be difficult to procure. The ordinary wage asked is four annas a day, but ploughmen are usually paid in kind, and are either given the crop from one *higha* of land for every twelve they plough or allowed the use of their employer's bullocks on their own farm for one day out of three. Most of these labourers are ex-garden coolies or poor Ahoms and Chutiyas, though in some places Assamese from Kamrup come up in search of work. Assamese occasionally work on the roads for the Public Works Department, provided that the work is at some little distance from their homes, but they are unpunctual and dilatory and seldom stay for long. Hired labour is often employed for getting in the rice crop, and none but the gentry regard such work as involving any loss of social status: Kalita women may, in fact, be seen cutting the rice of a fisherman or Nadiyal. Servants are paid from Rs. 2 to Rs. 9 per mensem, but the ordinary rate is Rs. 4 or Rs. 5 with food. Artizans are very scarce, and when procurable command high wages.

Table X shows the price of rice, salt, and pulse as re- **Prices.** corded at the markets of Sibsagar, Jorhat, and Golaghat. Rice and pulse have risen in price during the last quarter of a century, while salt has been growing cheaper.

In a rural area like Sibsagar the question of price is of more importance to those who sell than to those who buy, and the undoubted prosperity of the district is to some extent due to the fairly high prices which the

villagers generally obtain. It is, however, difficult to ascertain these prices with any degree of certainty as the *dun*, which is the unit of measure, is a basket which may contain from $3\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{3}{4}$ seers of unhusked rice. Near Jorhat unhusked rice generally sells at the rate of six *duns* or 21 seers for the rupee. In less accessible parts the price seems to range from 7 to 9 *duns*, or from $24\frac{1}{2}$ to $31\frac{1}{2}$ seers per rupee. Where the raiyats in the western portion of the district have taken advances, as much as 15 *duns* or $52\frac{1}{2}$ seers are taken by the traders for a rupee. Mustard generally sells at the rate of from $12\frac{1}{2}$ to 15 seers per rupee. The price of molasses is subject to sharp variations. Up to 1902, it had stood fairly steady at between Rs. 4 and Rs. 5 per maund. It fell in that year to Rs. 2-8, but in 1903 was up again to Rs. 5.

**Food and
dress.**

The staple food of the people is boiled rice, eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi*, which is not very largely used. Goat's flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, but is not easily procurable in the central and more densely populated portions of the district. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar and *ghi*. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhoti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper and sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a *riha* or scarf tied round the bust, and a shawl.

These clothes are still very often made at home, and in the case of the women, and of the large wraps worn in the cold weather by men, are frequently of silk. Sibsagar is, in fact, the great centre of *muga* cultivation, and most well-to-do women wear a *muga riha* as an article of every day attire, and many don a silk petticoat as well. Foreigners wear cheap imported cotton cloths and blankets and ready made coats, and the use of these articles of clothing is spreading amongst the Assamese. This change is hardly for the better, as the cheap cloths of Manchester are not so artistic or durable as the products of the native loom, and it is doubtful whether the time that was formerly spent on weaving is now employed on any profitable occupation. The *jhapi* or national hat of the Assamese has already been described in detail. Boots and shoes are the exception, and in their own homes even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp pointed grass. Reference has been already made to the jewellery manufactured near Jorhat. The extent to which it is worn is a clear index of the prosperity of the district.

The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside there is a patch of beaten earth which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses, almost huts, and in a corner there are generally two open sheds, one of which

Dwellings.

contains a loom, while the other serves the purpose of a cow-house. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and areca nut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The general effect is picturesque enough, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the whole place very damp and excludes all sun and air. At the back there is generally a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and other plants are grown. The houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and must be very hot in summer. They are built on low mud plinths, and are thus extremely damp. The walls are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the roof of thatch, the rafters and the posts of bamboo.

The houses of the middle class are built on practically the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo, while roofs of corrugated iron are sometimes to be seen. The furniture of the ordinary cultivator is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell-metal utensils, and bottles and earthen pots and pans. His bedding is a quilt made out of old cloths, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses, but these articles of luxury are seldom found outside the towns. This style of house is common to all the Assamese, but in the flooded tracts there are none of the graceful areca palms, as the tree cannot thrive if the

roots remain long under water. These orchards and gardens are a considerable source of wealth to the cultivator, and a house standing on a bare patch of ground has always a somewhat poverty stricken appearance to eyes accustomed to the luxuriant vegetation in which the typical Assamese cottage is embedded. The Miris on the Majuli build their houses on platforms to raise them above the level of the floods, and the village site is practically bare. The prosperity of the Assamese in Sibsagar is indicated by the comfortable appearance of their houses. There are probably few places in Assam where building materials would be more expensive, as there is little Government forest in the more densely settled tracts and jungle-wood posts, thatching grass, and cane have often to be brought from a considerable distance. But the people realize that a comfortable home is conducive to their personal well-being, and are willing to expend the time and labour which its erection and maintenance entails. Ex-garden coolies build, as a rule, small and uncomfortable cottages.

The Settlement Officer is of opinion that the condition of the people only partly depends upon the fertility of the soil. The best homesteads and a fairly high standard of comfort are frequently found where the land is unfertile, and the material condition of the people is, he thinks, largely a question of their habits. Villagers who consume great quantities of opium and rice-beer are obviously not likely to be well endowed with this world's goods. The purchase or preparation of these luxuries entails a heavy drain on their resources

Economic condition of the people satisfactory on the whole.

and a man besotted with beer or opium is hardly likely to make an energetic or a careful cultivator. There are several very fertile villages in the east of the Ghiladhari mauza, in the centre of Khumtai, and in Dihingia in which the condition of the people is unsatisfactory. This, the Settlement Officer reported, was due to their own laziness, and to their indulgence in opium and rice-beer, and far from proposing any abatement of taxation, he suggested a slight enhancement, in the hope that it might stimulate them to make a proper use of their advantages. This view is corroborated by the condition of the people near Jorhat itself. The land is far from fertile, the immense mass of the cultivators subsist on the produce of their gardens and of one crop, transplanted paddy, yet nowhere in Assam will be seen more comfortable homesteads or more prosperous villagers.

**Indebted-
ness.**

Most of the local revenue officers consulted report that a considerable proportion of the raiyats are in debt, but the Settlement Officer does not consider that indebtedness has as yet assumed serious dimensions. Money is usually borrowed to defray the expenses of litigation, or of a marriage or *srauth* ceremony, to purchase cattle, or as a temporary measure to meet the land revenue demand. The rates of interest are usually high, and range from 24 to 75 per cent per annum, the higher rates being charged on loans of small sums for short periods. The creditor is, however, often a fellow villager, and in these cases it is doubtful whether the nominal rate of interest is exacted.

The tea industry is the principal source of the prosperity of the people. The total amount disbursed as wages to the garden coolies in 1903-04 was no less than 48 lakhs of rupees ; and a considerable proportion of this enormous sum must find its way into the pockets of the villagers in return for the products of their farms and gardens. Silk clothing and handsome jewellery are common wear in most portions of the district, and there can be no question that an energetic and industrious cultivator is sufficiently well off. The sale of surplus paddy is the principal source from which the villagers obtain the money they require. Other sources of income are mustard, pulse, molasses, poultry, fruit and vegetables, and the sale of thatching grass, bamboos, fuel, and of *eri* and *muga* cloth and thread. In the west of the district the people sometimes hollow out canoes or prepare mats for sale, and the Mikirs raise cotton, lac, and chillies. Assamese occasionally take contracts for the building of huts and outhouses for the Public Works Department; and Bengalis work on roads, and still more often on the gardens to which they were previously indentured.

Sources
from which
people
obtain
money.

There is probably no surer test of the so-called civilization of a people than the extent to which it has succeeded in freeing itself from conventional and meaningless restrictions. It is only natural, therefore, that in a remote and, till recently, inaccessible Province like Assam, the daily life of the villagers should be surrounded by strange tabus of different kinds. From one of the greatest of the curses of Indian life they at any rate are

Conventional
restrictions.

free, and the purdah is a thing that exists in little more than name. The womenfolk of the ordinary well-to-do cultivator would as soon think of interning themselves within the four walls of the house as would a farmer's wife at Home, though when appearing in public, at a railway station or a steamer ghat, they might perhaps discreetly veil their faces, at any rate before a European. Apart from the ordinary restrictions of caste, which need not be referred to here, it is days that seem to be the principal stumbling block to the villagers of Assam. No one ever enjoys making payment of the Government dues, but to the Assamese this process, for reasons which are not quite clear, is especially objectionable on a Monday or a Wednesday. All over the district the villagers avoid these days, but in the Amguri mauza they take exception to Thursdays, and Saturdays as well; while, in the Athgaon tahsil, Friday is thought an inauspicious day on which to pay the revenue. Seed is not generally sown on a Tuesday or a Saturday, or the day of the new moon, and the full moon, and the eleventh day after either of these events. Mustard (*shoriya*) must not be sown on any lunar day beginning with an *s*, or pulse (*muh*) on any day beginning with an *m*. The following list of forbidden days from the Nahorani mauza recalls the *fasti* and *nefasti* days of the old legal calendar so vehemently denounced by Cicero. Paddy, pulse, and mustard can only be sown on Mondays and Wednesdays, and if either of those two days happens to fall between the 7th and 10th of the lunar month in the case of pulse, and the 11th and 14th in the case of mustard, they at

once are barred. Revenue should only be paid on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. On Saturday you must not cut thatching grass or bamboos, or even your own hair, on Monday you must not thatch your house, on Tuesday you must not put earth on the floor or cut bamboos or your own hair. Similar restrictions are found in every part of the district, though it is not everywhere that they are observed so carefully.

At the time when we first came into possession of the Province, the difficulty of communications proved a most serious obstacle to its development. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business. McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post, which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days and Bishnath in three days more.* From Gauhati to Dibrugarh it was a month's journey for a "pinnacle," even in the cold weather; † and in the rains against the current the journey took much longer.

Few people presumably had sufficient time or patience to undertake the voyage at that season of the year. Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his

* Topography of Assam, pages 9 and 82.

† Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Calcutta, 1854, paragraph 82. Butler in his sketch of Assam puts the journey from Calcutta to Saikhoa in a badgerow *via* Dacca at over nine weeks even in the cold weather.

tedious way, his view bounded, as a rule, by high banks of treacherous sand, which then, as now, were continually being undermined by the current, and falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot ; and the tedium of this dreary voyage of fully three months' duration must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort.

**Beginning
of steam
navigation.**

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the valley, but in 1848, the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the valley to Dibrugarh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure ; but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made with results that were not unsatisfactory, even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary con-

trast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a country boat. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers; and in 1855, Lieutenant-Colonel Jenkins complained that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected, the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand, the accommodation was designed on an extremely liberal scale, as the regulations issued in 1851 expressly authorized passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases; a proviso which suggests a very deliberate voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seems to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati; but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but in spite of this, it showed a fair

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1857.

profit, and it was evident that there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

**Private
steamers put
on the river.**

In 1860, the India General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks, provided that the Government boats were taken from the line; and since that date the steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company, with whom they are associated. But in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs; and in a letter to Government openly gave expression to the opinion that it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter, he drew the following dreary picture of the isolation of Assam:—

“With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagna-

tion and torpidity, and a terrible sense of isolation, by which enterprise is chilled and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles; nor on the other hand is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him."

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884, a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur. Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached. The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat; and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that, and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed which, in comparison with that attained by the large cargo boats, was most

commendable. During the rains Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri, while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation of the river is not entirely free from difficulty, the companies were not incited to further efforts by competition, and some years elapsed before any attempt was made to reduce the duration of the voyage. On the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway, the companies realized that it was necessary to accelerate their timing if they were to retain their traffic; and during the rains, steamers now reach Dibrugarh on the fourth day from Dhubri, while the voyage from Dibrugarh to Goalundo only occupies three days, though in the cold weather the journey takes a day longer.

A service of fast steamers also plies between Dibrugarh and Calcutta *via* the Sundarbans, by which goods can be sent direct without any necessity for handling. Sibsagar possesses a long river frontage and has numerous ports. The steamers call at Dhansirimukh, Neghereting for Golaghat, Kakilamukh for Jorhat, Kamalabari on the north bank, Dikhomukh, Disangmukh for Sibsagar, and Dihingmukh.

**The Rail-
way.**

A glance at the map will show that, whatever may have been the condition of affairs half a century ago, Sibsagar is well supplied with the means of communication at the present day. Along the north runs the Brahmaputra with its excellent steamer service, along the south there is the Assam-Bengal Railway, and the two are connected by the Jorhat State

Railway which runs from Kakilamukh past Jorhat town to Mariani and Titabar. The main line of the Assam-Bengal Railway, which extends from Chittagong to Tinsukia, enters the district about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Dimapur. From there it runs in a north-easterly direction up the valley of the Dhansiri to the Kamarbandh Ali station about six miles east of Golaghat. It then trends more to the east and runs along the south of the district till it finally enters Lakhimpur beyond Bhojo station. The total length of the Railway in Sibsagar is 152 miles, and the stations going from west to east are Dimapur, Bokajan, Barpathar, Jamaguri, Furkating, Kamarbandh Ali, Titabar, Hilikha, Mariani, Nokachari, Seleng, Amguri, Namtiali, Nazira, Dhodar Ali, Lakwa, Safrai, Bhojo, Sapekhati, and Namrup. By the completion of this railway in 1904 the district has been connected by rail with Gauhati, Dibrugarh, and the seaport of Chittagong. Jorhat, which is situated about the centre of the district, is 137 miles by rail from Dibrugarh, 227 miles from Gauhati, and 482 miles from Chittagong. The most noticeable effect produced by the opening of the line was the diversion of the Naga Hills and Manipur traffic from the Neghereting-Dimapur road to the railway. Travellers and goods for either of these two places had formerly to proceed by steamer to Neghereting, and from this place there was a tedious march of 75 miles to Dimapur. This is now a thing of the past, and Dimapur is only $12\frac{1}{4}$ hours' journey from Gauhati.

The Jorhat State Railway is on a gauge of 2 feet, and was completed in 1885 at a cost of Rs.4,73,000. It runs

from a terminus on the Brahmaputra, which is shifted from time to time to meet the exigencies of that changing river, past Jorhat to Cinnamara, where it divides into two branches, one of which goes to Titabar and the other to Mariani.* The total length of the line including the two branches is 30 miles.

Roads.

For internal traffic Sibsagar is well supplied with roads, and, leaving out of account the private roads maintained by tea gardens, there were altogether in 1904 942 miles of road within the district. This allows of one linear mile of road for every five square miles of area, a proportion which is moderate enough, but this figure is, as figures often are, misleading. Amongst the sparsely peopled Mikir Hills and in the valley of the Dhansiri there are practically no roads, and in the Majuli, which is much exposed to flood, there is only a section of the North Lakhimpur-Kamalabari road some ten miles in length. In addition to these regular main roads there are a considerable number of village tracks, over which the raiyats are able to cart their dhan in the cold weather, and, generally speaking, the inhabitants of the Sibsagar plain are well supplied with the means of communication.

The trunk road.

The principal road in Sibsagar is the section of the south trunk road which traverses the whole length of the valley from Fakirganj to Sadiya. It enters the district about three quarters of a mile east of Bagori and runs between the Mikir Hills and the swamp that fringes the Brahmaputra as far as the river Dhansiri. East of the

* The Mariani branch was not opened till 1887.

Dhansiri, the road trends a little towards the south, and tea and rice fields take the place of forest, hill, and marsh. After crossing the Jhanzi, the road, following the configuration of the district, turns towards the north, and after passing through Sibsagar enters Lakhimpur on the further side of the Dihing river. The road is of considerable width, and over the greater part of its length is raised well above the level of the highest floods. All the minor streams and rivers are bridged, but the Dhansiri, Jhanzi, Dikho, Disang, and Dihing have to be crossed on ferries at all seasons of the year, and the Diphu in the rains. The total length of the road in Sibsagar is 116 miles. There are inspection bungalows at the following places: the length of the stage in miles going from west to east is shown in brackets after the name:—Kaziranga (11) Bokakhat (10), Kamargaon ($10\frac{1}{2}$), Badlipar (7), Dergaon (8), Kakadanga (5), Jorhat (11), Kakojan (10), Jhanzi (9), Gaurisagar (8), Sibsagar ($7\frac{3}{4}$), and Dimu (12).

After the trunk road probably the most important thoroughfare in the district is the Dhodar Ali which takes off from the trunk road at Kamargaon and runs south-east to Golaghat. Here it turns to the east and passes right along the south of the district into Lakhimpur, a total distance of 119 miles. There are inspection bungalows along the road at Titabar, Mariani, Char Ali, Tenga-pukri, Sonari, Sepakati, and Dillih.

Other important roads in the Golaghat subdivision are the road between the Brahmaputra at Neghereting and Golaghat, and the road from Golaghat to Wokha garden, whence a bridle path runs to Wokha in the Naga Hills.

The road from Golaghat to Dimapur used formerly to carry all the traffic for the Naga Hills and Manipur, but since the completion of the Assam-Bengal Railway it has ceased to be of any importance, as there is no local traffic. In the south of the subdivision a road runs east from Wokha garden to the Kakadanga. But these are only the main thoroughfares, and so well is this portion of the district provided with the means of communication that in Central Golaghat there is not a single village which is more than three miles distant from a road.

The Jorhat roads.

In Jorhat there is a very complete system of roads, which, starting from the town as a centre, run to various points on the Dhodar Ali. On the west there is the Kamarbandh Ali, then comes the Na Ali which crosses the Dhodar Ali and is extended through the south of the Amguri mauza to the Kakadanga. The Garh Ali runs at a little distance from and parallel to the Na Ali to Titabar, but throws off a branch at Cinnamara which goes to Mariani. Further east again is the Ladoigarh road, which runs from a point near the Brahmaputra in a south-easterly direction to the Jhanzi.

This is, however, but a skeleton outline of the system of Jorhat. Any attempt to describe the minor roads in detail would be alike tedious and confusing.

The Sibsagar roads.

Sibsagar *sadr* is also well supplied with roads, most of which are a legacy from the days of native rule. The *paik* system provided the Ahom Rajas with an unlimited supply of labour, which was freely utilized in the excavation of enormous tanks and the construction of high embanked roads. The trunk road runs through the

northern section of the subdivision, the Dhodar Ali near the hills towards the south, and between them and parallel to them run the Sologuri and Rajgarh Alis. But besides these there are many other roads, the most important of which is perhaps the road from Nazira to Disangmukh.

During the last quarter of a century the roads of the district seem to have been much improved. Sir W. W. Hunter, in his statistical account of Sibsagar, published as late as 1879, wrote as follows :—

Improve-
ment of the
roads during
the last 25
years.

"Owing to the numerous small streams which intersect the country, and the frail bamboo bridges which last only for a short time, most of the roads are impassable during the rains. The general mode of transit when the country is dry, is by elephants or coolies; no bullock carts are used by the people of the district, but wheeled conveyances have lately been introduced by some of the planters, and found to answer remarkably well. The only drawback to a more extensive use of the cart or waggon is the want of good bridges on the main road, and the few small branch roads."

This would be a very misleading description of the condition of affairs in Sibsagar at the present day. Ferries there are, no doubt, but the proportion is for Assam unusually small. There is not a single ferry on any important road in the Jorhat subdivision or in Golaghat east of the Dhansiri, except across the rivers in the flooded tract between the trunk road and the Neghereting steamer ghat. The bridges are no longer frail structures of bamboo, but are generally made of iron girders supported on strong wooden posts. Bridge building has, in fact been carried to such lengths that no less than Rs.67,000 were expended by the Jorhat Local Board in bridging the Disai where it crosses the Dhodar Ali. Hired coolies

are nowadays hardly ever used as a means of transport, and, according to a census taken in 1904, there were no less than 3,700 carts plying in Sibsagar. Round Jorhat the roads are very sandy and remain in comparatively fair order even during the rains, but in other parts of the district they are much cut up if used to carry heavy traffic in the rains. The roads to the steamer ghats are the ones that suffer most, and in wet weather the roads from Disangmukh to Sibsagar and from Neghereting to Golaghat become almost impassable.

Rivers.

The rivers in the district are also used for purposes of commerce. A boat of four tons burthen can proceed up the Disang as far as the Dillih ghat in the rains, and the Mohmara ghat in the cold weather, and small feeder steamers occasionally visit the latter station when the river is full, to fetch away the tea manufactured by the Singlo Tea Company. Country boats in the rains go right up the Dikho to Santak, but in the cold weather a boat of four tons burthen can hardly get as far as Nazira. Boats also go up the Jhanzi and the Kakadanga in the rains, but in the cold weather these rivers are too shallow to be much used.

In July and August a feeder steamer runs up the Dhansiri to Golaghat once or twice a week, and a boat of four tons burthen can make this station even in the cold weather. In the rains it can get as far as Dimapur, but traffic on the Dhansiri as on the other rivers in the district has been much affected by the opening of the Assam-Bengal Railway. The Ahoms seem to have been expert boat builders, they possessed a numerous and powerful

fleet, and a separate section of the people was entrusted with the duty of providing the king with boats and keeping them in proper order. All of this special knowledge has unfortunately been lost. The only boats manufactured by the natives of the district are canoes hollowed with fire and adze out of logs of wood, and such planked boats as there are, are imported from Bengal.

The following statement shows what an enormous **Post and telegraph offices.** development there has been of postal business since 1875. A list of the places at which post and telegraph offices are situated, will be found in the appendix.

Number of post offices in		Number of letters and post cards omitting thousands delivered in			Number of Savings Bank accounts in	Balance at the credit of the depositors in.
1875	1903-04	1861-62	1870-71	1903-04	1903-04	1903-04
13	52	18	62	793	1,372	Rs. 5,08,000

The Assamese have no commercial aptitude, and the natives of Sibsagar have allowed the whole of the profits **Commerce and trade: imports.** of the wholesale and of a large portion of the retail trade to be absorbed by foreigners. The principal men of business are the Kaiyas, the astute Marwari merchants whose shops are to be found on every tea garden, at the three headquarters towns, and wherever else there is money to be made. They are practically the sole importers of the district, and bring up from Calcutta piece-goods, clothes and blankets, grain and pulse of various kinds, salt, oil, *ghi*, iron, cement, corrugated iron, umbrellas, and thread.

Centres of trade.

The chief centres of trade are the three small towns of Sibsagar, Jorhat, and Golaghat; Nazira, the headquarters of the Assam Tea Company; and Dimapur which is the depôt for the trade of the Naga Hills and Manipur.

None of these places are, however, of much importance, and the opening of the Assam-Bengal Railway is said to have diminished what little trade there used to be in Sibsagar and Jorhat. There is nothing in the conditions of the district to conduce to the formation of small towns. There are no arts or industries to draw the people together, and the overwhelming importance of the agricultural interest has a decentralizing effect on trade. On every tea garden there is a Kaiya's shop, and Kaiyas' shops are scattered about the villages to buy up the surplus dhan, and sell piece-goods, salt, oil, tobacco, and yarn to the peasants. But so scattered are they that there are only about sixty places in the district which have as many as three shops or more. The names of these places will be found in a statement in the Appendix.

Exports.

Apart from tea, which is shipped direct to Calcutta, the principal articles produced within the district are dhan and mustard. Surplus dhan is either sold by the cultivator to the coolie, who buys it in the villages or at the local market, or to a middle man in the shape of a Kaiya or Muhammadan trader. Mustard is bought either by the Kaiya, the local oilman or *teli*, or by the Ramdiyals from Kamrup who come up in the rains with their boats and ship it to Gauhati. The Kaiyas also purchase a certain quantity of *muga* silk, and, on the Majuli, cane; but the bulk of their profit is derived from sales, and

they have not that lucrative trade with the hill tribes which contributes so much to their prosperity north of the Brahmaputra.

A great deal of business is, however, transacted at the **Markets**. local markets, which, for the convenience of the coolies, who are the purchasing section of the community, are usually held upon a Sunday. Here the villagers bring their surplus dhan or rice, fruit and vegetables, molasses, goats and poultry ; and the traders come with grain of various kinds, piece-goods, tobacco, salt, oil, and the various other articles which form their stock. Ready made clothing is on sale, and all the other little articles of cheap haberdashery which are likely to catch the coolie's eye and appeal to his untutored taste. A list of these bazars will be found in the Appendix. The largest and most important are probably those held at Dhojder and Titabar. There is not much trade with the hillmen except in cotton which is brought down by the Lhota Nagas to Golaghat ; but between 30,000 and 40,000 maunds of Manipuri rice have of recent years been brought annually to Dimapur. Most of the external trade of the district is still carried by the steamers plying on the Brahmaputra, though a portion of it will now no doubt be transferred to the Assam-Bengal Railway by which it can be conveyed direct without handling to the sea at Chittagong. The principal exports are tea, which in 1903 was probably, even at wholesale prices in Calcutta, worth not far short of £ 800,000, silk cloths, mustard, cotton, and hides.

**Municipal.
Sibsagar.**

The small town of Sibsagar has been constituted a station under Act V, B. C. of 1876, and its affairs are managed by a committee, three of whom are officials and hold their seats by virtue of their office, while the remaining seven are nominated by the Chief Commissioner. The principal sources of income are a grant from Government, fees from markets and pounds, and a tax assessed at the rate of 4 annas per mensem per 100 square feet of shop sites, and of 4 per cent on the annual value of other buildings. The total income of the station in 1901 was under Rs.12,000, but the population of Sibsagar in that year was only 5,712. The civil station is built on the edge of the magnificent tank to which reference has been already made, and the native quarter lies between it and the Dikho. The total area of the town is 2.94 square miles, which is served by 17 miles of road, 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles of which are metalled. Drinking water is obtained from the Sibsagar tank, from two smaller tanks which have been excavated by the Commissioners, from three masonry wells, and from the Dikho river. The view of the tank with its fringe of trees, and the Hindu temples, public offices, and bungalows dotted along the bank is picturesque enough, but the rest of the town is little more than a prosperous village. There is comparatively little trade, and had it not been the headquarters of the district the place would have been of very small importance. Even this source of importance it is losing, as the transfer of the headquarters of the district to Jorhat has recently (1905) been sanctioned.

Jorhat, the headquarters of the subdivision of that **Jorhat.** name, is situated on the left bank of the Bhogdai river. The little town only covers an area of .64 of a square mile and had a population in 1901 of 2,899 souls, but it has been formed into a union under Act V, B. C. of 1876. There are five Commissioners who are nominated by the Chief Commissioner. The Subdivisional Officer acts as Chairman and takes an active part in the management of municipal affairs. The total income, excluding the opening balance in 1901, was only Rs. 6,500, Rs. 2,000 of which were provided by the Local Administration. There are ten miles of road within the town, but only half a mile is metalled. Most of the public buildings are situated within the earthen ramparts of an old Assamese fort, which was erected at the time of the Moamaria insurrection towards the end of the eighteenth century. There is a little tank within this fort, on the banks of which the cutchery, the residence of the Subdivisional Officer, and one or two other public buildings have been erected. The town is connected by rail with the Brahmaputra at Kakilamukh, and the Assam-Bengal Railway at Mariani and Titabar, and is the centre of some trade.

Golaghat is also a union under Act V, B. C. of 1876, **Golaghat.** but it is even less populous than Jorhat, as there were only 2,359 inhabitants at the last census. The town covers an area of .78 of a square mile and contains 13 miles of unmetalled and half a mile of metalled road. As in Jorhat, there are five Commissioners nominated by

Government, but the management of the town vests to a great extent in the Subdivisional Officer. The total income in 1900-01 excluding the opening balance amounted to about Rs.6,000, one-fourth of which was provided by the Local Administration. The bazar is situated on the right bank of the Dhansiri, and is the depôt to which the Lhota Nagas bring their cotton.

There are no other towns in the district, and no places of sufficient importance to merit detailed description. An account of each village was prepared at the last settlement, but these accounts have not been considered to be worth printing even in connection with the settlement proceedings.

**Local
Boards.**

In the early days of British Administration there was little money available for public works of any kind, and what there was was generally expended under the control of the Public Works Department or the District Magistrate.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one-seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted

by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs.1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present-day. The Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, but each of the other boards in the district is presided over by the Subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, except a few main lines of communication, the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor

receipts. This income is supplemented by an annual grant from Provincial Funds. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVII.

The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works costing Rs.500 or over must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval, and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that department. Less important works are entrusted to the board surveyors.

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CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Native system of land revenue—Early settlements—The settlement of 1893—The Settlement of 1902—Growth of land revenue—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Settlement staff—Land tenures—Mauzas and tahsils—Realization of land revenue—Unsettled waste—Excise—Income tax—Stamps—Public works—Government—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Police—Military Police—Volunteers—Jail—Education—Medical—Survey.

The system in force under the Ahom kings was one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. In theory one *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the State, and while so employed was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas** of *rupit* land, and the land occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *busti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount was assessed at 4 annas a *bigha*. In addition to this each adult *paik* paid a poll tax of one rupee.

At the time when the district was under the management of Purandar Singh the poll tax was raised to Rs. 3 per *paik*, but on the resumption of his territories in 1838 the country was measured up and the revenue

* One area = 3.025 *bighas*.

assessed upon the land itself and not upon its occupants. The revenue at first taken was only 4 annas per *bigha* for *rupit*, or land growing transplanted rice, and 2 annas a *bigha* on all other kinds of land. In 1844 the rate on *rupit* was raised by one anna a *bigha*, and in 1849 the rate on other land was raised to 3 annas 6 pies, but this very moderate enhancement was accompanied by a concession to the gentry of the district. There could be no question that the upper and middle classes amongst the Assamese had suffered severely from the emancipation of their slaves and the abolition of their privileges, and as a measure of relief the curious concession subsequently described as 'ten twenties' was sanctioned by the Government. Persons who paid Rs.20 or more in revenue were assessed at only half the usual rates, and people paying anything between Rs.20 and Rs.10 were assessed at Rs 10 only.*

**Hopkinson's
settlement.**

In 1865, the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, proposed to discriminate between *basti* or garden and other land and to raise the *bigha* rates in Assam Proper to Re. 1 per *basti*, 10 annas for *rupit*, and 8 annas for other land. No detailed enquiries were made, there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the three different classes of land, there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class, or even between district and district. It was argued that the revised rates were so moderate that they would not have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson declared that the

* *Vide* Mille's report on Assam.

existing assessment was ridiculously low, and in support of his opinion pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about four lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days represented a difference of about 40 per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the enormous enhancement the revenue was collected without difficulty.

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold division of land was retained, but instead of imposing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were divided into four grades and the rates assessed varied with the grade of the village*. The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination and were modified by them in view of the fertility of

The settle-
ment of 1893.

* The following were the rates assessed per *bigha* :—

Class.			Bastl.	Kupit.	Faringati.
			Rs. a.	Rs. a.	Rs. a.
1st	...	...	1 6	1 0	0 12
2nd	...	...	1 4	0 14	0 10
3rd	...	...	1 2	0 12	0 9
4th	...	...	1 0	0 10	0 8

the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by sub-tenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based was that the worst lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities.

**The settle-
ment of 1902.
The soil unit.**

The resettlement which was begun at the close of 1902 was carried out in a much more elaborate and scientific manner than any of its predecessors. While the maps and records were being brought up to date, the Settlement Officer made detailed enquiries with the object of ascertaining the classes into which the land could be most suitably divided, and the relative value to be allotted to each class. The unit of settlement was what is known as the soil unit. Each soil unit pays a certain quantity of revenue, the actual sum assessed per soil unit varying with the village. To every *bigha* of land is

assigned a certain number of soil units, the number varying with the class of land concerned. Thus in every *bigha* of *bhal bari*, or first class homestead land, there were 24 soil units, whereas in every *bigha* of badly flooded land there were only 4, and whatever revenue might be assessed on badly flooded land in the village, first class homestead land, if there was any, paid six times as much. The data used when determining the number of soil units to be allotted to each class of land were (1) the local enquiries of the Settlement Officer and his Assistants, (2) experiments made with the view of ascertaining the average quality of the crop, (3) the opinions expressed by certain selected persons, and (4) the views of the raiyats who were assembled at various centres. Considerable weight was attached to the opinions of the raiyats, as it was thought that they at any rate should know the comparative value of the different kinds of land they held. It will be seen that the process of differentiation was carried much further at the new settlement than at the one which preceded it. In 1893, the maximum rate per *bigha* in a village could never be more than double the minimum. In 1903, the maximum rate might be six times the minimum. In 1893, all land in the village followed the class of the village. In 1903, there was no such restriction, and a small area of poor land in an otherwise rich village could be assessed on its own merits.

After the maps and records had been brought up to date a special staff was deputed to determine the class into which each field or homestead fell. The total

Value
assigned to
each soil
unit at the
new settle-
ment.

number of soil units in the block, or group of several mauzas into which for re-assessment purposes the district was divided, was then ascertained*, and the former revenue of the block divided by this figure. The quotient represented the incidence of revenue per soil unit under the former settlement and was known as the *unit incidence*.

The next stage in the proceedings was the determination of the new *unit rate*, the rate which was to be assessed on each soil unit during the current settlement.

The Settlement Officer first decided whether he would raise or lower the unit rate for the block as a whole, and took as his standard in assessing villages the unit rate he had fixed on for the block. This was the rate imposed on the average village, while villages above or below the average had the rate raised or lowered in proportion to the extent to which they seemed to differ from the mean.

The general condition of the inhabitants, the prices they could obtain for their produce, and the facilities for trade which they enjoyed, were the principal factors taken into consideration when determining the value to be assigned to the soil unit of the village.

**Classes of
land.**

Land in Sibsagar was divided into 13 different classes. Homestead or *bari*, was classified in three grades, good (*bhal bari*), average (*bari*), and poor (*takula bari*). Land fit for the growth of transplanted rice (*rupit*) was distributed under four main heads, *charanpara* or land enriched

* The area falling under each class was known and all that was required was to multiply the number of *bighas* in each class by the number of soil units in the class.

by the drainage of the village site, *alatiya*, or clay loam, *balichehiya* or sandy land, and *jalatak* or land liable to flood. Each of these four classes was again divided into *da* or low and *bam* or high land. Except in the case of the flooded class, *da* land is naturally the more valuable of the two. Two other classes were *chechukiya* or shaded lands, and *faringati* which embraced all land which was neither *bari* nor *rupit*.

The following statement shows the number of soil units assigned to each class of land:—

BARI.			RUPIT.								Chchukiya. Faringati.	
Bhal bari.	Bari.	Tukala bari.	Charan- para.		Alatiya.		Balichehiya.		Jalatak.			
			Da.	Bam.	Da.	Bam.	Da.	Bam.	Da.	Bam.		
24	18	9	21	13	16	9	12	7	4	12	6	6

The revenue payable by a soil unit differed in the different villages and varied from nine pie to two annas. These arrangements did not, however, hold good in the case of areas where fluctuating cultivation is the rule, such as the Majuli and the marshes along the south bank of the Brahmaputra. One rate was here imposed on all land in a block which was not either good homestead or *rupit* land.

**Growth of
the land
revenue.**

The statement in the margin shows the gradual expansion of the land revenue and the settled area since the district first came under our administration. The enormous expansion of the settled area is due partly to the natural growth of the population, partly to the importation of great numbers of coolies.

A. D.	Rs.	Acres.
1840-41	73,330	Not available.
1851-52	1,48,911	157,780
1865-66	2,70,937	295,978*
1868-69	4,34,006	Not available.
1892-93	8,72,484	674,419
1893-94	12,01,689	659,133
1902-03	14,19,127	762,960

**Established
and fluctuating
cultivation.**

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy, land is not readily resigned, and it frequently possesses a considerable market value. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice (*ahu*), and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. Fluctuating cultivation is, however, only practiced on the Majuli and in the marshes that fringe the southern bank of the Brahmaputra.

**Annual and
periodic
leases.**

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops of the district are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic lease. The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorise the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the

* Commissioner's letter dated 21st September 1867.

rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognized. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either form of lease, or any individual field within the holding can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional Officer.

The basis of the land revenue system is the mandal, The mandal. the village accountant and surveyor who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs.8 to Rs.12 per mensem. In March he proceeds to his circle, inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *dagchitha* in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *jama'andhi* or rent roll, which classifies the fields by holdings, and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot weather he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement.

He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops, he assists in the collection of the revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land. In most Provinces in India a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can be resigned, and there is not, as a rule, any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. This system is not in force in the Assam Valley. Land held on ordinary lease can be resigned at any time, provided that all the revenue due is first paid in and that proper notice is given to the authorities. These resignations are an essential element of the system of fluctuating cultivation and in 1903-04 over 18,000 acres were excluded and over 32,000 acres were included in the settlement. Figures for each year since 1900-01 will be found in Table XII.

**Superior
settlement
staff.**

Above the mandal comes the supervisor kanungo, a peripatetic officer, on pay ranging from Rs.30 to Rs.40, who checks his work both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy-collectors and draw salaries ranging from Rs.100 to Rs.200 per mensem. The appointments are usually made by selection from candidates who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must either have taken a university degree or have read up to that standard.

The total sanctioned staff for the Sibsagar district is 3 sub-deputy-collectors, excluding those employed as tahsildars, 10 supervisor kanungoes, and 205 mandals. In cadastral areas the average size of a mandal's charge is 9 square miles of settled land.

The different tenures in the district fall under two main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops, and (2) those under which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, but there are also considerable areas of revenue free (*lakhiraj*) land and land settled at half rates (*nisf-khiraj*). In the time of the Ahom kings the whole of this land is said to have been held rent free, but in 1834 the Government of India ruled that “all rights to hold lands free of assessment, founded on grants made by any former Government, must be considered to have been cancelled by the British conquest. All claims, therefore, for restoration to such tenures can rest only on the indulgence of Government, without any right” Mr. David Scott, the first British Commissioner of Assam, found that, even under the Ahom Rajas, these revenue free lands had been assessed at the rate of five annas a *pura** and he

Land tenures. *Lakhiraj* and *Nisf-khiraj* land.

* A *pura*=4 *bighas*. 3·025 *bighas*=1 acre.

imposed this cess, which was subsequently raised to eight annas, upon them. The Government of India then directed that an enquiry should be instituted into these claims, and that all cases in which land was held on *bonâ fide* grants dating from before the time of the Burmese conquest, or on account of services which were still performed, should be reported to them for orders. These instructions were not fully observed by the Commissioner of that time, Captain (subsequently General) Jenkins. This officer, for reasons which have never been ascertained, drew a broad distinction between *debottar* or temple lands, and *brahmottar* and *dharmottar* lands, i.e., lands which were devoted to some religious purpose but were not actually the property of a temple. The former he released from all claims for revenue ; on the latter he imposed the rate assessed by Mr. Scott, which happened to be half the full rates prevailing at the time. No report was even submitted to the Government of India, and no final orders were ever received from them, but the right of the former class of proprietors to hold free of revenue, and of the latter at half the usual rates, has been definitely recognized.

The total area of *lakhiraj* land in the district in 1902-03 was 39,095 acres, and of *nisf-khiraj* land 4,991 acres. The area settled year by year at full rates is shewn in Table XV. In the Mikir Hills no attempt is made to measure up the area actually occupied by the people, and in lieu of land revenue a tax of Rs. 2 is imposed on every house.

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1861. The underlying principle in each case was that the land should be held on long leases at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions.

Grant of land for the cultivation of special crops.

Between 1861 and 1876 the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs. 2-8 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854 were allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there are now in the district only 5,194 acres of land held under the rules of 1838, and 726 acres under the rules of 1854, while there are 124,570 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for, though it is nominally put up to auction, there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For two years the grant remains revenue free and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules will be found in Table XV.

When Mr. Mills visited the district in 1853 it was divided into 130 mauzas with an average revenue of about Rs. 900 per mauza. The general tendency since that

Mauzas and tahsils.

date has been to increase the size of the unit of collection and to reduce the cost. In 1867, the mauzadars, as the collecting officers were called, received 15 per cent of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later their commission was reduced to 10 per cent, and, in 1872, the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent could only be drawn on the first Rs.6,000 of revenue, 5 per cent being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, the idea gained ground that Government would do better by putting the mauzadar aside and employing salaried officials as a collecting agency. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him.

The first tahsils opened in Sibsagar were at Namtidol, Jorhat, and Golaghat in 1892, after experience had already been gained of the working of the system in Lower Assam. Three years later tahsils were started at Sibsagar, and at Athgaon in the Golaghat subdivision. In that year about 50 per cent of the total land revenue demand was collected through the agency of tahsildars.

**Comparative
advantages
of tahsildars
and mauza-
dars.**

The tahsildari system is cheaper than that of collection through mauzadars, the cost in one case being about 5 per cent, in the other 7 per cent of the gross amount realized. Serious difficulties are, however, experienced in dealing direct with such a large body of raiyats, and

there is no doubt that the tahsil system is not as popular with the people as the one which it replaced. A mauzadar of experience knows whether delay in payment is due to shortness of funds or to recusancy; he knows the time which is most convenient for payment in individual cases, and as he is not bound by the *kist* dates, his collection admits of an elasticity which no Government rules can establish. It has the further advantage of providing a body of representative men, who, while regarded by the people as their leaders, are bound to the Government by the facts of their position. It has accordingly been decided to try the experiment of gradually breaking up the tahsils, and substituting in their place mauzadars who will be entrusted with the duty of collecting from Rs. 20,000 to Rs.30,000 of revenue. In accordance with this policy the tahsils at Sibsagar, Jorhat, Golaghat and Athgaon have already been resolved into their constituent mauzas.

The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments, three-fifths on January 15th and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the Government demand from the sale of mustard and pulse, where it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement is also due in one instalment on that date. If a raiyat defaults a notice of demand is issued calling upon him to pay up the amount due.* This

Arrange-
ments for
the realiza-
tion of reve-
nue.

* It has recently (1905) been proposed to authorise District Officers to dispense if they consider it necessary with the notice of demand, and also to impose a small fine not exceeding one rupee on habitual defaulters.

usually has the desired result, but if further steps are called for the defaulters property is attached. It is very seldom necessary to do more than this, but, as a last resort, the goods and even the lands of the defaulter can be sold. In 1903-04, notice of demand was issued on account of 12 per cent of the total land revenue demand and property was attached on account of 5 per cent. The number of cases in which it was necessary to have recourse to sale was very small, and the revenue on account of which property was sold only represented 0·2 per cent of the total demand. The number of cases in which an estate is put up to auction is comparatively small, and it is not unfrequently the case that, even when advertised for sale, it attracts no bid. In the more sparsely settled portions of the district it has hardly any selling value, and where it would fetch a considerable price it seldom comes to the hammer.

Area of un-
settled
waste.

The figures in the margin show the total area of the district as reported by the Assistant Surveyor-General, Calcutta, the settled area, and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03, and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year. No less than 59 per cent. of

	Sq. miles.
Total area of the district	... 4,996
Settled area	... 1,192
Area of reserved forests	... 876
Area of waste land	... 2,928

the total area of the district falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this area is fit for cultivation or human

habitation. The figures include the area of roads and of tracts that are permanently under water, which in Sibsa-gar with its network of rivers draining into the mighty

Brahmaputra amounts to a very considerable total. It also includes the area of the Mikir Hills which could never support a dense population, of the unhealthy valley of the Dhansiri, of extensive tracts which are submerged during the rainy season, and are hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It has already been shown in the chapter on population that over the greater part of the plains portion of the district the density is fairly high, and the proportion of good waste land still available for settlement is probably quite small. There is in fact a tendency to emigrate from Sibsagar to Lakhimpur, and this to any one acquainted with the character and habits of the Assamese clearly indicates that in the localities from which emigration is taking place some pressure on the soil is beginning to be felt. The total area and the area of unsettled waste in each revenue unit outside the Mikir Hills is shown in Table XV. A. The greater part of this waste is situated in the flooded tracts on either side of the Brahmaputra.

In 1903-04, the revenue raised under the different heads of excise in Sibsagar was just over seven lakhs of rupees, nearly five-sevenths of which were derived from opium. Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable, and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879,

Excise.
Opium.

Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands. While Assam was under the Bengal Government licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883 the right to sell opium in a particular *mahal* was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day.

Steady decrease in:
consumption.

The statement in the margin shows that during the last quarter of the century there was a steady decrease in the quantity of opium issued in the district.

This, no doubt, was partly due to the repressive effect of a heavy excise duty, partly, in all probability, to the spread of civilization and to the growth of a feeling that opium-eating was not quite good form. In 1835, Capt. Mathie, Collector of Darrang, reported that opium cost about Rs. 5 a seer. Since 1890, it has cost from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a seer, and it is evident that such high prices must tend to check the growth of the opium habit amongst those who have not yet taken to the drug. The facilities for purchase have also been very much curtailed. In 1873-74 there were 1,378 licensed shops in the Sibsagar district—in 1903-04 there were only 186. At the same time it cannot be denied that opium smuggling is comparatively easy, and the profits of the business large. In 1879, the difference between the treasury price of opium at Patna

	Maunds issued.
1873-74	482
1879-80	464
1889-90	397
1899-00	369

and Sibsagar was Rs. 10 per seer, but since 1890 it has been twice that sum. In 1901, a small preventive force consisting of one inspector, two sub-inspectors and five chaprasis was sanctioned for employment in the Province, but they did not succeed in detecting any cases of importance, and they have recently been amalgamated with the ordinary excise staff.

Opium is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually supposed to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed. The figures in Table XVI suggest that the Ahoms are still very much addicted to the opium habit. The Mikirs are great consumers of the drug but, in spite of the presence of a large Mikir population in the west of the Golaghat subdivision, the amount of opium issued in this portion of the district, is not half of that issued in Sibsagar. Even Jorhat, though it has a larger population than Sibsagar, takes very little more than half the opium used in the eastern subdivision.

The Assamese are seldom spirit drinkers, and the indigenous tribes generally content themselves with the strong beer (*laopani*) which they brew from rice.

Method of
consump-
tion:
Ahoms great
opium
eaters.

Country
spirit

Provision has, however, to be made for the foreign population who consume large quantities of country spirit. This spirit can be easily prepared by any cooly, so that to prevent illicit distillation Government has to provide them with reasonable facilities for obtaining the liquor they require. Up till the end of 1904-05 it was the practice to put up the right to manufacture and sell liquor at certain specified localities to public auction. The statement in the margin shows the number of shops and the prices paid for them of recent years. The foreign population increased very nearly three-

	No. of shops.		Revenue. Rs.
1873-74	9	...	11,424
1879-80	26	...	33,314
1889-90	35	...	64,864
1899-1900	33	...	1,43,385

fold during the last twenty years of the century, yet it will be seen that the number of shops was only increased by seven. The large in-

crease in revenue was partly due to the growth of the liquor drinking population, partly to competition amongst the liquor vendors which forced up the prices of the shops at auction. It has recently been decided to establish a central distillery in the district as it is thought that by this means it will be possible to ensure the supply of a better quality of liquor. The amount of revenue raised from country spirit in each subdivision will be found in Table XVI.

Laopani.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu

castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is sometimes illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone-shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must, of course, be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Assam, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle.

It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. The number of shops, the quantity of ganja issued, and the revenue obtained in each subdivision will be found in Table XVI. The quantity taken in Golaghat is comparatively small.

Income tax. The total receipts under the head of income tax in 1903-04 amounted to Rs. 35,132, about two-thirds of which were realized from the salaries paid to garden managers and their staff. The receipts under the head of "other sources of income" amounted to Rs. 8,362 paid by 203 persons. More than three-fourths of this was derived from the 141 persons assessed under the head of commerce and trade, in spite of the fact that the wealthiest Kaiyas in Jorhat and Golaghat pay income tax in Calcutta on the profits made in the Sibsagar district. Forty-one persons of the professional class were assessed in 1903-04, and paid altogether Rs. 1,268. The assessment under Part IV of the Act is based on the reports of the local revenue officials. The district is a progressive one and the receipts from income tax have steadily increased. In 1887-88, they amounted to Rs. 28,600 and they rose steadily to Rs. 44,400 in 1902-03. It is a significant fact that the increase in the assessment under the head "other sources of income" was considerably higher than the increase under the head "salaries paid by companies and private employers." The marked decrease in the following year was due to Act XI of 1903

which raised the minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs.1,000.

The receipts from stamps in 1903-04 amounted **Stamps.** to Rs. 77,300, three-fourths of which were derived from the head judicial stamps. The revenue raised under this head was higher than that derived from any other district in the Assam Valley; the revenue from non-judicial stamps was exceeded in Lakhimpur alone. Details for later years will be found in Table XIII

Public Works are in charge of an Executive or **Public Works.** Assistant Engineer who is usually assisted by four upper and four or five lower subordinates. The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, schools and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, circuit houses, dāk bungalows, and inspection bungalows on provincial roads. Inspection bungalows on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The most important provincial roads which are directly under the Department are the trunk road which runs for 114 miles through the district, the road from Golaghat to the Brahmaputra, and the road from Disangmukh steamer ghat through Sibsagar to Nazira railway station. The Public Works Department are also responsible for the maintenance of the protective embankments which have been thrown up along the rivers in the neighbourhood of Sibsagar. It has already been explained that Local

Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the Department has to contend are the absence of an artizan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour. It is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Sibsagar is largely due.

Government. For general administrative purposes the district is divided into three subdivisions : Sibsagar (*sadr*) is at present under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, and Jorhat and Golaghat are entrusted to assistant magistrates who are almost invariably Europeans. The headquarters of the district will, however, soon be transferred from Sibsagar to Jorhat. The Deputy Commissioner is allowed two subordinate magistrates and one sub-deputy collector as his immediate assistants, and a second magistrate and a sub-deputy collector are usually posted at each of the stations at Jorhat and Golaghat.

Criminal and civil justice. Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the orders passed by magistrates of the second or third class and from the orders of first class magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley districts. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were 7 stipendiary and 4 honorary magistrates in the district, and the former decided 2,640 and the latter 74 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 5,890 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 1,975 cases under the Penal Code return-

ed as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or the human body. Criminal work is heavier in Sibsagar than in any other district of the Assam Valley. Elsewhere the Assamese are singularly free from criminal tendencies or instincts, but cases of burglary are by no means uncommon in the neighbourhood of Jorhat. The number of murders, though not as high as in Lakhimpur, is still above the average. In the ten years ending with 1889 there were on the average six during the year. In the next decade the annual average rose to 11, and in 1900 there were 19, or one case for every 30,000 people, a ratio more than four times as high as that prevailing in the Province of Bengal in 1901. Most of these murders are committed in a fit of passion and are often due to jealousy. Now and again, however, there are cases which argue a considerable degree of intelligence in the perpetrator of the crime. One such occurred in 1897. An Assamese living near Jorhat went to a Kaiya's shop and informed the merchant that there was a Miri living near the Brahmaputra who wished to purchase coral and gold leaf. He offered to guide the Kaiya to the house, and the man set out taking with him an assortment of jewellery from which the Miri could make his choice. The whole story of the Miri was a fabrication, and at a lonely part of the road the Assamese murdered and robbed the unsuspecting Kaiya. Then, with the object of diverting suspicion from himself, he went to the shop and enquired for the missing man, saying that he had been compelled to leave him near the Miri's house. After some days, when the

Kaiya failed to return, suspicions were aroused, and an enquiry was instituted which resulted in the detection and execution of the murderer. The average annual value of property said to be stolen during the decade ending with 1899 was Rs.25,000. Cattle theft is fairly common, and attempts have even been made to steal elephants, in spite of the difficulties attendant on the concealment and disposal of the missing property.

Special rules are in force for the administration of criminal justice in the Mikir Hills tract. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred, and the Chief Commissioner is the chief appellate authority. The Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentences of death, transportation, and imprisonment of seven years or upwards subject to the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner. Fine or fine and imprisonment may be awarded in lieu of any other punishment, provided that the amount of punishment awardable for such offence under the Indian Penal Code be not exceeded, and no appeal lies of right from any sentence by the Deputy Commissioner of less than three years' imprisonment.

Civil Justice. There is no separate staff for the trial of civil cases and assistant magistrates act as Munsifs, while the Deputy Commissioner is Subordinate Judge. He has, however, recently been relieved of the task of hearing civil appeals, which was a very heavy tax upon his time, and they now go direct to the Judge at Gauhati. Civil work is much heavier than in the other districts of the Assam Valley. In 1902, there were 2,257 cases instituted in the Munsifs'

Courts, while 157 appeals were disposed of by the Subordinate Judge, a number more than half of the total returned for the whole of the Assam Valley Division. The great majority of the suits instituted in the Munsif's Courts are for money and moveables, and nearly three-fourths of the total were disposed of without contest.

The Deputy Commissioner is the District Registrar, while one of the assistant magistrates acts as sub-registrar at each of the subdivisions. The number of documents registered is small, and, in 1903, was only 1,696, but this is a larger number than was registered in any other district of the Assam Valley, with the exception of Goalpara. Registration.

The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 3 inspectors, 25 sub-inspectors, and 303 constables. 172 smooth bore Martinis are allotted to Sibsagar, and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional headquarters who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty. Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. Table XIX shows the strength and cost of the police in 1881, 1891, and 1901. Rural police are not employed, such assistance as is necessary being given by the village elders or *gaoburas*. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire

into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrant cases. The cost of living is considerable, the demand both for skilled and unskilled labour is much in excess of the supply, and the pay of an ordinary constable is not sufficient to attract or retain a good class of recruit. The result is that the men resign their appointments on the slightest provocation, a fact which affords a serious obstacle to the efficient management of the force. For police purposes the district is divided into ten investigating centres. The names of these stations and the strength sanctioned for each will be found in Table XX.

**Military
Police.**

A portion of Sibsagar marches, however, with independent territory, and during the winter season it is thought desirable to have a small garrison of men trained for military duties available for cases of emergency. A detachment consisting of sixteen non-commissioned officers and men of the Lakhimpur military police battalion is accordingly stationed for six months of the cold weather at Abhaipur, at the foot of the hills occupied by the independent Naga tribes.

Volunteers.

In addition to the regular force of police there are a considerable number of volunteers residing in the district who can be called out when required. A corps of mounted infantry was first enrolled in Sibsagar in 1883 with a strength of 104 members. Eight years later the volunteers in the four upper districts of the Valley were formed into one corps known as the Assam Valley Mounted Rifles, and in 1896 the Mounted Rifles

were converted into Light Horse. The strength of the corps in 1903 was 312, 130 of whom were residing in Sibsagar.

There is a jail at the headquarters station of the **Jail** district and subsidiary jails at both of the two subdivisions. The jail compound at Sibsagar covers an area of 1.81 acres and is surrounded by a masonry wall. It contains accommodation for 40 male and 9 female convicts. The subsidiary jails at Jorhat and Golaghat are surrounded by bamboo palisades. The buildings are constructed of bamboo and timber, with thatched roofs at Jorhat and roofs of corrugated iron at Golaghat, and can accommodate 31 prisoners of all classes at the former and 32 at the latter place. Convicts are usually employed on gardening, oil pressing, paddy husking, and surki pounding, and when sentenced to more than 3 months' imprisonment are sent to Sibsagar. Female prisoners with sentences of over one month's imprisonment are drafted to Tezpur or Gauhati. Drinking water at Sibsagar and Jorhat is obtained from the tanks at those two places, and at Golaghat is drawn from a masonry well.

In 1841, Mr. Robinson of the Gauhati College described the state of education in the Assam Valley as being "deplorable in the extreme."* He pointed out that, unlike the Province of Bengal, where every village had its teacher supported by general contribution, provincial school had only recently been introduced in Assam, and their

* A descriptive account of Assam, page 277.

number was in consequence extremely small. Vernacular schools were first established at Sibsagar in 1840, and in 1847-48 there were 10 vernacular schools in the district. The next few years witnessed very little progress, as on the occasion of Mr. Mill's visit in 1853 there were only 9 schools of all grades. The condition of these schools was, moreover, far from satisfactory, and the Collector only proposed to keep up four, which were situated at Nazira and the headquarters of each of the three subdivisions. 1874-75 is the first year for which complete statistics are available, and the following abstract shows the progress of education since that year. Figures for years subsequent to 1900-01 will be found in Table XXII.

Year.	No. of secondary schools.	Pupils.	No. of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total number of pupils.	No. of persons in district to each pupil.	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
							Males.	Females.
1874-75	6	820	130	2,918	3,738	79	...	...
1880-81	5	693	125	3,745	4,438	83	15.32	0.24
1890-91	8	1,104	257	7,676	8,780	52	23.38	1.40
1900-01	14	1,928	328	10,110	12,038	50	24.00	1.50

Sibsagar is unusually well supplied with high schools. There are Government high schools at Sibsagar and Jorhat an aided school at Nazira, and three unaided schools at the headquarters of each of the three subdivisions. The Jorhat and Sibsagar Government schools are two

of the largest in the Province, and the school at Jorhat is the only Government high school in Assam in which the direct expenditure is entirely met from the fees paid by the pupils. Middle schools are situated at Sibsagar town, Hatipati, Jorhat, Cinnamara, Golaghat, Dingao and Marangi.

High schools are those institutions which are recognised by the Calcutta University as capable of affording suitable preparation for the Entrance Examination. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course—(1) Assamese, comprising literature, grammar and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic (5) Elements of Euclid (Book I), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, and (6) simple lessons in botany and agriculture.

Primary schools are divided into two grades, upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools

Secondary
education.

Primary
education.

is only two per cent. of the total number, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes reading, writing, dictation, simple arithmetic, and the geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, Mensuration, and a little History. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes.

There is a survey school at Jorhat in which villagers can be trained to serve as mandals, and scholarships are granted to a limited number of Assamese boys who are brought up as artizans in the Jorhat railway workshops. Law classes are also held at Sibsagar.

**Medical
staff.**

The district is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Sibsagar. It contains seven dispensaries, and the supervision of the work done at these institutions is one of the most important duties of the Civil Surgeon. He also acts as Superintendent of the Jail, he controls and inspects the vaccination department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death rate for the previous year has exceeded 7 per cent.

The conditions under which the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill ventilated, and in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms, which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from diseases arising from chills, which might have been avoided by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford indeed a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none, the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is generally bad and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are undoubtedly factors which contribute to produce a high mortality, and nearly every one of them could be eliminated.

Complete
absence of
rural sanita-
tion.

In comparison with Central and Lower Assam Sib-sagar is, however, a very healthy district. The greater part of it consists of a wide plain lying south of the

Brahmaputra, and for some reason or another it would seem that the south bank of the river, except in those parts where the Assam Range projects into the valley, is much healthier than the country on the north even though it may be situated at some distance from the Himalayas. There is not much jungle near the principal centres of the population, the proportion of unsettled land is comparatively small, the winter season is cold and bracing, and the rainfall is abundant. It has hitherto been exempt from the dreadful scourge of *kala azar*, and if only the people would pay more attention to the most elementary laws of sanitation, the indigenous population would in all probability increase with great rapidity.

Vital statistics.

Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headman to the mandal of the circle, this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals, as the *gaobura* was an unpaid servant of Government and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each *gaobura* 2½ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901 the mean recorded birth and death rates were 24 per mille, and it is obvious that both of these figures were much below the truth. The statistics of age recorded at the census are, however, so unreliable, and the disturbing effect of immigrants is so great that it is not possible to fix a normal birth and death rate for the district.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death most often takes in the Sibsagar district, at any rate according to the official returns. These returns are, however, so inaccurate, and so little reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examination. Most fatal illnesses are accompanied by a rise in temperature, and the villages are in consequence very prone to ascribe every death to fever. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks

Causes of mortality.

			Cholera. Death rate per mille.
1884	...	...	6.2
1886	...	...	4.1
1888	...	...	5.3
1890	...	...	11.6
1894	...	...	5.7
1897	..	...	9.8

out with quite exceptional violence. The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent.

Small-pox also appears from time to time in a virulent form. The highest death rates per mille recorded from this cause during recent years were 2.2 in 1896 and 5.1 in 1897. Vaccination has, however, made considerable progress amongst the people, and small-pox is not as a rule responsible for many deaths. Other diseases which are prevalent in the district are measles, whooping cough with its attendant pulmonary complications, worms, and parasitic skin diseases.

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment,

Increase in facilities for obtaining medical aid.

it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been some increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the

Dispensaries.	No.	Patients treated.	No.
1881	2		8,561
1891	3		19,220
1901	6		51,765

statement in the margin it appears that for every patient treated in 1881 there were 6 in 1901. The principal dispensaries are those

situated at Sibsagar, Jorhat, and Golaghat, each of which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of 64, 82, and 50, respectively. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, worms, cutaneous disorders, dysentery, diarrhoea, rheumatic affections, bronchitis, and other diseases of the organs of respiration. The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXV.

**Native
methods of
midwifery.**

There are very few professional midwives amongst the Assamese, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourse is had to Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrificed, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the

absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance. If the labour is a natural one, all is well, but if complications arise the case has usually a fatal termination, and it is probable that many lives are lost owing to disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases. The nucleus of a professional midwife class is, however, to be found in the *bejins* or female doctors, who receive a small remuneration for attending cases and practise beyond the limits of their own villages.

In addition to the Government dispensaries there is a hospital on almost every one of the tea gardens in the district.

A professional survey of the district was made at **Survey.** the time when Assam was still a division of Bengal and maps were published in 1873. They are on the scale of one mile to the inch and show the sites of the villages and the physical features of the country. A topographical map on the scale of four miles to the inch was published in 1882 and is now under revision. An area of 1,521 square miles, which included the more densely populated portions of the district, was cadastrally

surveyed by the professional party during the seasons of 1888-89, 1889-90, and 1891-92. The maps are on the scale of 16 inches to the mile, and in addition to topographical features show the boundaries of each field. Certain areas which were omitted by the professional party were subsequently surveyed by local agency on the basis of a theodolite traverse, and the results obtained from the cadastral survey both by the professional and local agency have been utilised in the subsequent revision of the maps.*

*The area so surveyed up to 30th September 1899 was 208 square miles.

APPENDIX.

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STATEMENT A.

List of tea gardens.

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarter.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.						
1	Anguri	Anguri Tea Co., Ltd.	Dopdar	20	2,003	923	1,415
2	Athabari	Messdames Hosack, Andrews and Reid.	Thaura Panidh-ing.	12	933	(a) 981	(b) 626
3	Ramunpukhri	Assam Co. ...	Nazira	14½	1,800	597	1,318
4	Banamali	Srijut K. P. Chaliba, pleader.	Khalafhogora...	25½	260	140	183
5	Banfera	Singlo Tea Co., Ltd.	Abhalpur	30	155	Included in Jabaka.	
6	Barahi	Barahi Tea Co.	Do.	31½	1,269	395	409
7	Barbam	Anguri Tea Co., Ltd.	Dopdar	17½	2,663	914	1,586
8	Barhat	Barhat Tea Co., Ltd.	Abhalpur	48	1,869	430	378

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION —(contd.)			Miles.			
23	Geleki ...	Assam Co. ...	Athkhel ...	18	4,118	1,367	3,136
24	Gosaibari ...	Srijut K. P. Chaliha, pleader.	Thaura Panidihing.	25	177	101	100
25	Halwating ...	Rajabari Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Do.	5	268	Included in	Rajabari.
26	Do. ...	Amguri Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Dopdar ...	21	2,026	521	929
27	Hingrajan ...	Dihing Co. ...	Khalaighogora...	30	522	(f)446	(f)698
28	Jabaka ...	Singlo Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Abhaipur ...	30	4,290	(g)1,010	(g)1,231
29	Kaliapani ...	Mesdames Hosack, Andrew and Reid.	Thaura Panidihing.	13	616	Included in	Athabari.
30	Kanubari ...	Grob Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Abhaipur ...	42½	926	Included in	93
31	Kasomari ...	Dihing Co. ...	Khalaighogora...	29	473	Included in Sonari.	Hingrajan.

STATEMENT A.

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		J. Hosack, Esq.	Thaura Panidih- ing.	15	1,226	217	378
32	Khangia	...	...	11	359	240	466
33	Kharabat	Do.	Do.	33	3,537	554	1,107
34	Khumtai	Assam Co.,	Khalaighogora--	22½	2,262	(b)1,299	1,153
35	Lakwa	Lakwa Tea Co., Ltd.	Silakuti	7	939	428	638
36	Maduri	Messrs. Grindlay & Co. ...	Joktali	8½	1,970	519	924
37	Mabkhuti	Assam Co. ...	Bakata	14½	7,881	1,438	3,410
38	Mekipur	Do.	Nazira	16	128	35	25
39	Meruahola	Srijunt Ananda Kumar Barua.	Dopdar	13½	2,826	1,398	2,821
40	Mezenga and Ligri- pokhri.	Assam Co. ...	Nazira	20	3,549	872	1,649
41	Mybella (Mathura- pur.)	Singlo Tea Co., Ltd.	Silakuti	19	2,634	832	1,861
42	Nabarhahi	Messrs I. G. Scott, J. Mc Intosh and the estate of J. Brander.	Do.	26	3,176	665	1,540
43	Naphuk	Singlo Tea Co., Ltd.	Abhaipur	15½	355	Included in Lakwa.	668
44	Rajabari	Lakwa Tea Co., Ltd.	Silakuti	5	578	(i)528	(j)700
45	Do.	Rajabari Tea Co. Ltd.	Thaura Panidih- ing.	9	4,120	805	1,873
46	Rajmai	Rajmai Tea Co.	Thaura Panidih- ing.	23	2,813	853	1,854
47	Safrai	Singlo Tea Co., Ltd.	Abhaipur	...	...	...	...

(i) Includes figures for Deoriting and Halwating.

(j) Includes figures for Halwating.

(i) Include figures for Kasomari.

(g) Include figures for Banfera.

(h) Includes figures for Rajabari (No. 44) and Thirwalbari.

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisions.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1908.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1908.	Labour force on December 31st, 1908.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION —(contd.)			Miles.			
48	Santak	Assam Co. ...	Dhopabar	16½	2,877	869	1,461
49	Sepakati	Grob Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Abhaipur	41	1,082	476	310
50	Sonari	Do. ...	Do.	28	582	(a) 375	307
51	Taotak	Assam Co. ...	Abhaipur	33	5,462	950	1,550
52	Teok	Disang Co., Ltd. ...	Do.	29	1,192	Included in Dipling.	516
53	Thirwalbari	Lakwa Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Silakuti	25	1,869	Included in Lakwa.	436
54	Tingalibam	Tingalibam Tea Co. ...	Abhaipur	36½	1,923	570	652
55	Tiphuk	Naga Ali Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Dopdar	17	2,023	558	1,419

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JORHAT SUBDIVISION.	Munshi Ahmad Baddiamall	Gakhirkhoa ...	17	291	40	10
1 Balamajan ...	Tyroon Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Kharikatia and Amguri.	18	1,085	532	490
2 Bandersulia and Khermia.	Barhalla Assam Tea Co.	Amguri ...	24	2,202	522	731
3 Barhalla ...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Katani ...	11	1,194	595	691
4 Bokabolla ...	Srijut Narayan Sarma Bez Barua.	Titabar ...	9 and 4 respectively.	380	180	131
5 Borsycotta and Begchung.	East India Tea Co., Ltd....	Do.	15	1,800	322	295
6 Chungi ...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Katani ...	4	4,212	865	1292
7 Cinnamara ...	East India Tea Co., Ltd....	Amguri and Titabar.	16	2,760	602	799
8 Daflating ...	Messrs E. E. Lawrie and Morison.	Holongapar and Katani.	8	2,162	(b)1,225	1,318
9 Daklongia, Hatigarh, and Kaliapani	Hulunguri Tea Co.; Ltd....	Lahing ...	21	583	151	115
10 Dalim ...	Kunan Devan Hills Produce and Co.	Nakachari ...	18	2,087	557	649
11 Debrapar ...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Katani ...	7	1,625	643	605
12 Dhekiajuli ...	Congdon Brothers.	Titabar and Amguri.	10 and 14 respectively.	1,141	480	371
13 Dnull and Deoghoria.	Estate of the late Kingsley.	Parbatia and Holongapar.	5	2,153	386	(c)969
14 Diha and Puranmati.						

(a) Includes figures for Baruaakli and Kanubari.

(b) Includes figure for Toklai.

(c) Includes figure for Harusarai and Parbatia.

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	JORHAT SUBDIVISION—(contd.)			Miles.			
15	Dihingapar and Goriahaba.	Messrs. J.S. Begg and R. J. Begg.	Nakachari	15	1,729	552	522
16	Disal	Grob Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	13	1,050	570	348
17	Gabru Parbat	Assam Co.	Lahing	21	777	462	644
18	Gariahaba	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd.	Khangia	5	653	254	360
19	Gatonga	Moabund Tea Co.	Do.	9	3,643	782	1,217
20	Hatichungi	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd.	Holongapar	6	493	429	470
21	Harusarai and Parbatia.	Estate of the late T. Kingsley.	Parbatia	5	948	514	Included in Dihingapar and Puranmati.

22	Helikha	...	Scottish Assam Tea Co ...	Amguri	...	15	3,687	1,247	1,234
23	Hulunguri	...	Hulunguri Tea Co. ...	Nakachari	...	17	1,339	756	789
24	Hunwal, Serelia and Hatiguri.	...	Hunwal Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Amguri	...	14	2,272	460	273
25	Jetukia and Jugibheta.	...	Executors of the late J. E. Todd.	Holongapar	...	9	1,075	655	768
26	Kakadanga	...	Srijut D. C. Barua and Srijut Sarvananda Barakakati.	Khangia	...	12	333	180	164
27	Kamarbund	...	Moabund Tea Co. ...	Do.	...	8	960	411	596
28	Kathalguri, Cinnateli and Dhodarpar.	...	Salana Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Nakachari	...	12	2,406	909	990
29	Khanikar	...	Hulunguri Tea Co. ...	Lohing (Gakhirkhoa)	...	20	205	188	160
30	Kharikatia and Rangajan.	...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Katani	...	11	3,068	1,061	1,365
31	Latekujan (including Babani, Tirual, Tipomria and Bichabari.)	...	Raj J. Barua Bahadur ...	Amguri and Kharikatia.	...	15	2,811	805	427
32	Madhapur	...	Srijut Bisturam Datta Barua.	Amguri	...	17	823	246	173
33	Mahima and Hatipara.	...	Mr. M. Begg, managing proprietor.	Tiabar and Amguri.	16 and 14 respectively.	...	834	453	299
34	Mariani	...	Hunwal Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Amguri and Kharikatia.	...	12	2,653	608	863
35	Meleng and Solabari.	...	Executors of the late J. E. Todd.	Holongapar	...	8	4,356	739	659

STATEMENT A.

List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area in acres on 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	JORHAT SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
36	Merang and Karoli.	Scottish Assam Tea Co....	Titabar	Miles. 11 and 18 respectively.	1,493	220	255
37	Moabund	Moabund Tea Co. ...	Khangla	12	1,563	934	1,972
38	Monmoy	Shek Khas Gaobura ...	Holongapar	11	216	85	47
39	Motijan	Shek Sahnur Ali ...	Anguri	13	100	65	78
40	Nagadhali	Hunwal Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Do.	14	1,293	462	489
41	Nagajunka	Congdon Brother ...	Do.	13	563	280	234
42	Naginijan and Sotai.	Jhanai Tea Association...	Nakachari	21	1,459	605	813

STATEMENT A.

43	Nakachari and Bheluguri.	Kunan Devan Hills Produce and Co.	Nakachari	14 and 17 respectively.	6,056	1,163	1,307
44	Noabari	Mr. M. Begg	Katani	10	1,521	421	340
45	Panbari	Messrs. C. T. Jessop and H. Dupuis.	Thengal	11	907	337	329
46	Rajai & Lahing	Kunan Devan Hills Produce and Co.	Holongapar, Gakhirkhoa.	12 and 15 respectively.	3,390	860	1,006
47	Rowriya	Rai J. Barua Bahadur	Soraibahi	4	464	222	219
48	Saklatinga	Brahmaputra Tea Co.	Parbatia and Khangia.	12	1,656	669	892
49	Sangsoa	Moabund Tea Co.	Khangia	15	1,400	900	1,292
50	Samaguri	Do.	Do	8	851	731	857
51	Seleng and Bois-ahabi.	Jhanzi Tea Association...	Lahing	22	5,231	2,026	2,371
52	Soraipani	East India Tea Co., Ltd.	Titabar	16	Not available.	285	328
53	Sycotta	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd.	Katani	9	1,621	582	588
54	Teok and Namsiu	Kunan Devan Hills Produce and Co.	Gakhirkhoa	14 and 16 respectively.	1,185	558	667
55	Thengalbari	Srijut Bisturam Barua	Thengal	12	693	269	222
56	Titabar	Mr. Marcus Begg, managing proprietor.	Titabar and Amguri.	12	1,060	127	142
57	Toklai	Disai Parbatia Tea Co.	Garamur	2	296	Included in Daklongia.	194

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Mauza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	GOLAGHAT SUB-DIVISION.			Miles.			
1	Badulipar ...	Messrs. Pringle and Riddell Bros.	Bangamati ...	14	1,830	545	849
2	Barjan ...	Barjan Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Dakshinhengra.	8	1,168	600	580
3	Barkathani ...	The Kingsley Golaghat Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Gurjoganla ...	7	320	(a) 955	(a) 862
4	Barsapari ...	Mr. T. Elliot ...	Namdayang ...	22	1,790	468	582
5	Barling ...	Srijiit Guru Prasad Kakoti.	Dakshinhengra.	6½	377	107	120
6	Betiani ...	The Kingsley Golaghat Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Dhekial ...	7	378	Included in Barkathani.	Do.
7	Bhulukiting ...	Do.	Dakshinhengra...	5½	542	Do.	Do.

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8	Bihora	...	Rajmai Tea Co.	...	Namdayang	...	21	1,174	493	680
9	Bonn	...	Messrs. Pringle & Riddell Bros.	...	Rangamati	...	15½	433	249	314
10	Chotsjan	...	Mr. H. J. Lawrie	...	Dakhinhengra.	...	9½	899	335	314
11	Dakhinhengra	...	Assam United Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Do.	...	10	1,855	410	608
12	Dholaguri	...	J. K. Rutter, Esq., & Dr. S. O. Bishop	...	Marangi	...	10	1,451	340	271
13	Diffu	...	Amalgamated Tea Estates Co. Ltd.	...	Namdayang	...	30	590	336	372
14	Dering including Haloating	...	Do.	...	Do.	...	38	559	203	122
15	Doiang	...	Messrs. H. T. Dupuis & H. Vaughan Cowley.	...	Ghiladhari	...	7	1,306	307	330
16	Dolonjan	...	Srijut Ghanaayam Barua, B. L., & Gunindranath Barua.	...	Do.	...	8	1,004	140	33
17	Doygrun	...	Amalgamated Tea Estates Co., Ltd.	...	Marangi	...	10	2,496	Included in Lattakujan.	
18	Duria	...	Duria Tea Co., Ltd.	...	Khumtai	...	10	2,383	785	1,062
19	Ekrajan	...	Mr. Riddell	...	Namdayang	...	25½	936	225	120
20	Farkating	...	Looksan Tea Co. and Messrs. R. B. Pringle and J. S. Fraser.	...	Athgaon	...	5	449	Included in Barkathani.	

(a) Includes figures for Betiani, Farkating, Garanga North, Golaghat and Benguakhos, Pandumoni and Bhulukiting.

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(contd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Manza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	GOLAHAAT SUB-DIVISION—(contd.).						
21	Garanga (Rangajan).	Lookan Tea Co. and Messrs. R. B. Pringle and J. S. Fraser.	Marangi	7	421	Included in Rangajan.	100
22	Garanga North	The Kingsley Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Dhekial	6	629	Included in Barkathani.	
23	Garanga South	Lookan Tea Co. and Messrs. R. B. Pringle and J. S. Fraser.	Ghiladhari	8	588	Included in Wokha.	
24	Garajan	Messrs. Pringle and Riddell Bros.	Rangamati	12	685	246	282
25	Ghiladhari	Assam United Tea Co., Ltd.	Ghiladhari	10	2,552	142	210
26	Golaahat included in Rangajan.	The Kingsley Golaahat Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Maukhoa	2	1,105	Included in Barkathani.	

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27	Halmira	...	Mr. G. V. Burrowes, Miss Nolan, Estates of late Greaves and Edward.	Dhekial	...	14	2,088	477	360
28	Halmiramukh	...	Mr. C. E. Peterson	Do.	...	3	102	90	77
29	Hatikhuli	...	Amalgamated Tea Estate Co., Ltd.	Namdayang	...	44	911	624	669
30	Hautley	...	Executors of the late Mr. James, A. R. Stevenson and Mr. E. W. Cambridge.	Khumtai	...	7	2,163	550	675
31	Khamtai	...	Messrs. Pringle, Stevenson and others.	Khumtai	...	13	3,417	877	1,099
32	Kopohuting	...	Munshi Muhammad Ali	Kacharihat	...	9	232	Returns not submitted.	
33	Khuthari	...	Mr. A. I. Brown	Duarbagri	...	50	52		
34	Latabari	...	Amalgamated Tea Estates Co., Ltd.	Namdayang	...	30	1,311	364	329
35	Lattakujan including Panka.	...	Do.	Marangi	...	14	1,677	(a)1,979	(a)2,076
36	Mahima	...	Mr S. H. Shaw and F. H. Fowler.	Gurjoganina	...	10	1,330	540	480
37	Makrang	...	The Golaghat Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Ghiladhari	...	12	1,321	371	433
38	Michamara including Kurunating.	...	Brahmaputra Tea Co., Ltd.	Michamara	...	12	2,173	959	1,425

(a) Include figures for Doygrun.

STATEMENT A.
List of tea gardens—(concl'd.)

Serial number.	Name of garden.	Name of owner or company to which it belongs.	Manza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional headquarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant, both mature and immature, on 31st December 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	GOLAGHAT SUB-DIVISION—(concl'd.)			Miles.			
39	Nagara ...	Messrs. Adam and Todd Naylor.	Ghiladhari ...	7	1,389	417	398
40	Naharani ...	Srijut Radhanath Neog, managing proprietor.	Naharani ...	16	178	75	24
41	Naharjan ...	Messrs. Pringle and Forbes.	Namdayang ...	30	1,514	505	480
42	Neghereting ...	Brahmaputra Tea Co., Ltd.	Dergaon ...	16	2,726	1,480	2,162
43	Numaligarh ...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd ...	Namdayang ...	19	2,441	600	816
44	Oating including Baliyan.	Do.	Ghiladhari ...	5	760	216	377
45	Padumoni ...	The Kingsley Golaghat Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Maukhoa and Dhekial.	4	214	Included in Barkuthani.	
46	Rangagora ...	Jorhat Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Rangamati ...	16	1,470	464	579

47	Rangajan including Chariakhat and Thorajan.	Looksan Tea Co. and Messrs R. B. Pringle and J. S. Fraser.	Marangi ...	5	4,934	(a) 1,015	732
48	Rangamati including Rangoliting.	Brahmaputra Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangamati, Michamara.	13	1,877	912	1,479
49	Simpkora ...	Borthola Tea Co., Ltd. ...	Ghiladhari ...	14	120	38	55
50	Sokeyting ...	Assam United Tea Co., Ltd.	Dakhinhengra ...	9	1,212	118	161
51	Wokha ...	Looksan Tea Co. and Messrs. R. B. Pringle and J. S. Fraser.	Ghiladhari ...	8	2,574	(b) 560	(b) 580

(a) Includes figure for Garanga (No. 21).

(b) Include figures for Garang South.

STATEMENT B.
List of post offices.

Name of post office.	Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Name of post office.	Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.
Ahataguri ...	Ahataguri mauza.	Golaghat ...	Golaghat town.
Amguri* ...	Namtidol tahsil.	Jhanzi ...	Namtidol tahsil.
Badulipar* ...	Rangamati mauza.	Jhanzimukh ...	Chaokhat mauza.
Barjan ...	Athgaon tahsil.	Jorhat ...	Jorhat town.
Barpathar ...	Barpathar mauza.	Kajiranga ...	Namdayang mauza.
Baruagaon ...	Athgaon tahsil.	Kakilamukh* ...	Hezari mauza.
Bihubar ...	Athkhel mauza.	Kamalabari ...	Salmara mauza.
Bokakhat* ...	Namdayang mauza.	Kamarbandhali ...	Athgaon tahsil.
Chaokhat ...	Chaokhat mauza.	Lakwa* ...	Silakuti mauza.
Cinnamara* ...	Jorhat tahsil.	Letekujan* ...	Golaghat tahsil.
Dergaon ...	Michamara mauza.	Mahima* ...	Gurjogania mauza.
Dhansirimukh* ...	Namdayang mauza.	Mahkhuti ...	Bakata mauza.
Dikhomukh ...	Sibsagar tahsil.	Maran* ...	Khalai ghogora mauza.
Dimapur ...	Dimapur mauza.	Mariani* ...	Jorhat tahsil.
Disangmukh* ...	Sibsagar tahsil.	Meleng* ...	Chaokhat mauza.
Ganakpukhuri ...	Gurjogania mauza.	Moabund* ...	Khangia mauza.
Gatonga* ...	Khangia mauza.	Nakachari* ...	Nakachari mauza.
Gaurisagar ...	Namtidol tahsil.	Namtidol ...	Namtidol tahsil.
Geleki ...	Athkhel mauza.	Nazira* ...	Nazira mauza.

Note.—The names marked with an asterisk are combined post and telegraph offices. There are also departmental telegraph offices at Dimapur, Jorhat, and Golaghat.

STATEMENT B.

List of post offices—(concl'd.)

Name of post office.	Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.	Name of post office.	Name of mauza or tahsil in which situated.
Neghereting* ...	Dergaon mauza.	Sibsagar* ...	Sibsagar town.
Numaligarh* ...	Namdayang mauza	Sokhlatanga ...	Khangia mauza.
Oating ...	Athgaon tahsil.	Sonari* ...	Abhaipur mauza.
Rajmai* ...	Thaura Panidihing mauza	Teok ...	Teok mauza.
Rangajan* ...	Jorhat tahsil.	Tiphuk ...	Namtidol tahsil.
Safrai* ...	Abhaipur mauza.	Titabar* ...	Jorhat tahsil.
Seleng* ...	Lahing mauza.		

Note.—The names marked with an asterisk are combined post and telegraph offices.
There are also departmental telegraph offices at Dimapur, Jorhat and Golaghat.

STATEMENT C.

List of markets.

Tahsil or mauza.	Place at which market held.	Tahsil or mauza.	Place at which market held.
<i>Sibsagar Subdivision.</i> Abhaipur mauza	Abhaipur. Bapaketi. Held every Monday.	Joktali mauza...	Athabari garden.
Silakuti „ ...	Sonari. Lakwa.	Namtidol tahsil	Dopdar.
Dhopabar „ ...	Charaideo. Mathurapur.		Kukurachoa.
Athkel „ ...	Santak. Athkhel. Geleki.		Naragaon.
Nazira „ ...	Mekipur.	Sibsagar tahsil...	Sibsagar town (Municipal bazar). Held daily.
	Mezenga.	Thaura Panidihing mauza.	Rajmai.
	Nazira Chak bazar. Held daily.	<i>Jorhat Subdivision.</i> Gakhirkhoa mauza.	Teok.
		Lahing „	Seleng.

Where not otherwise specified these markets are always held on Sunday.

STATEMENT C.
List of markets—(concl'd.)

Tahsil or mauza.	Place at which market held.	Tahsil or mauza.	Place at which market held.
<i>Jorhat—(concl'd.)</i>			
Nakachari mauza	Dobrapar.	Golaghat tahsil	Bheloatar.
	Tirual. Held every Wednesday.		Golaghat. Held every Wednesday and Sunday.
Holongapar mauza.	Meleng.		Letekujan. Held every Friday.
Jorhat tahsil ...	Jorhat Chak bazar. Held daily.		Panikora.
	Rangajan. Held every Wednesday.	Gurjoganiamauza.	Barkhathani garden. Held every Tuesday.
Amguri and { Kharikatia mauzas. }	Barhalla.	Dergaon „ ...	Neghereting. Held daily.
	Hilikha.		Neghereting Garhali side.
Titabar „ ...	Titabar.	Rangamati „ ...	Bholaguri.
Garamur „ ...	Cinnamara.		Rangagora.
Katani „ ...	Mariani.		Rangamati.
Khangla „ ...	Gatonga.	Namdayang „ ...	Hatikhali.
	Moabund.		Ikarajan.
<i>Golaghat Subdivision.</i>			Naharjan.
Dimapur mauza...	Dimapur.		Numaligar Biharahat
Athgaon tahsil...	Barkathani. Held every Tuesday.		
	Dakhinhengra Ghiladhari.		
	Halikihat in village Kharjan. Held every Wednesday and Sunday.		
	Oating.		

Where not otherwise specified these markets are always held on Sunday.

STATEMENT D.

List of villages containing three or more permanent shops.

Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.	Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
<i>Sibsagar Sub-division.</i> Abhaipur mauza.	Naphuk ...	3	Namtidol tahsil.	Abhaipuria ...	3
	Bangapahar ...	4		Bangaligari ...	5
	Sonari (North) ...	7		Chamdar ...	3
	Do. (South) ...	9		Lunpuria ...	3
Silakui mauza	Ramun ...	3	<i>Sibsagar tahsil</i> <i>Jorhat Sub-division.</i> Nakachari mauza.	Namta Bangali ...	3
Dhopabar „ ...	Barduar ...	3		Parbatia ...	3
	Belengbari ...	3		Allichija ...	3
	Bogdai ...	3		Cinnatoli ...	4
	Mathurapur ...	3		Mautjuli ...	5
Athkel „ ...	Dolasoria Bamgaon.	3	Salmara mauza	Nagadora Balimara	4
	Gohaingaon ..	5		Naginijan ...	4
Nazira „ ...	Nazira (in the land of the Assam Co.)	70		Tirual hatkhola ...	10
Joktali „ ...	Bartala ...	8		Auniati ...	3
			Charigaon „	Chengeligaoon ...	3
	Borakhua ...	3	Parbatia „	Bhatmora ...	3
	Mechaghar Gohaingaon.	3		Charingia	3
	Nazira bazar ...	28		Matigaon (Old) ...	4
	Chunpora gohain	3	Jorhat tahsil	Mahabandhagaon	6
Bachara „ ...	Kujibali ...	3		Nagarmahal ...	93
			Kharikatia and Anguri mauzas	Nangolgaon ...	3

STATEMENT D.

List of villages containing three or more permanent shops—(concl'd.)

Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.	Tahsil or mauza.	Village.	No. of permanent shops.
<i>Golaghat Subdivision.</i>					
Rengma mauza	Bhitarkaliani ...	3	Michamara mauza.	Dadhoragaon ...	3
Barpathar mauza.	Barpathar ...	5		Dalijan ...	5
Dimapur mauza.	Dimapur ...	36	Namdayang mauza.	Rojabahar ...	3
Athgaon tahsil.	Barahigaon ...	3		Bilatia ...	3
	Fechuyal ...	3		Garmur ...	3
	Gohaingaon ...	3		Khaligaon ...	3
	Gorigaon ...	3		Mahmaiki ...	3
	Kacharihat ...	3		Rowroar ...	6
	Tirual ...	3			
Golaghat tahsil	Dhekial ...	3			
	Habisowa ...	3			
	Teliagaon ...	3			
Naharani mauza.	Dhodangaria ...	4			
Dergaon mauza	Dergaon ...	4			
	Jelehuagaon ...	3			
	Kumargaon ...	3			

TABLE I.
Average maximum and minimum temperatures registered at Sibsagar town.

	January.	February.	March.	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.	November.	December.	Year.
Maximum temperature	70°·1	73°·1	79°·1	82°·5	85°·9	89°·3	90°·0	89°·2	88°·1	84°·8	78°·3	71°·5	81°·8
Minimum temperature	49°·5	53°·3	60°·0	66°·5	71°·7	76°·4	77°·9	77°·7	76°·2	70°·8	59°·6	50°·7	65°·8

TABLE II.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average is calculated is shown below the name of each station.

Months.		AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.					
		Dimapur (8 years).	Golaghat (30 years).	Jorhat (29 years).	Nazira (25 years).	Sibsagar (45 years).	Sonari (9 years).
January	...	0.56	1.01	0.93	1.27	1.14	1.40
February	...	1.61	1.56	1.41	2.27	2.16	2.58
March	...	2.91	4.43	4.28	4.81	4.74	6.44
April	...	4.64	8.39	8.36	9.27	9.88	9.20
May	...	6.05	10.44	9.62	9.97	11.47	10.60
June	...	8.96	12.11	11.52	13.43	14.14	12.58
July	...	10.38	15.16	15.24	15.08	15.89	18.37
August	...	9.75	13.60	14.32	16.09	16.29	16.38
September	...	9.01	10.08	9.23	10.46	11.77	10.60
October	...	4.42	4.03	4.04	5.11	5.17	4.71
November	...	0.78	0.53	0.54	0.91	1.11	0.85
December	...	0.47	0.59	0.60	0.66	0.59	0.68
Total of year	...	59.54	81.93	80.09	89.33	94.35	94.99

TABLE III.
Distribution of population.

Tahsil or mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
<i>Sibsagar Subdivision—</i>						
Sibsagar tahsil ...	45,612	38,583	+7,029	147.75	308	1,421
Namtidol tahsil ...	58,145	54,365*	+3,780	159.93	364	11,443
Joktali mauza ...	8,681	7,426	+1,255	22.27	390	755
Athkhel „ ...	15,268	Not known.	+15,268	61.18	250	7,745
Abhaipur „ ...	21,632	15,161	+6,471	219.95	98	10,983
Khalaighogora „ ...	14,635	11,136	+3,499	114.16	128	5,881
Silakuti „ ...	13,657	10,092	+3,565	54.13	252	3,384
Dhopabar „ ...	11,673	9,077	+2,596	43.18	270	6,089
Thaura Panidibing „	14,417	10,391†	+4,026	153.59	93	4,348
Hachara „	4,834	4,073	+761	13.77	351	...
Geleki „	3,210	...	+3,210	...	...	3,210
<i>Jorhat Subdivision—</i>						
Jorhat tahsil ...	63,654	52,360	+11,294	144.19	441	22,603
Lahing mauza ...	14,017	11,799	+2,218	76.45	183	5,281
Gakhirkhoa „ ...	5,350	2,896‡	+2,454	31.64	169	2,936

* The Jokaisukh mauza (population 2,509 in 1891) has been transferred from the Namtidol to the Sibsaigar tahsil, the figures for 1891 have been corrected. The population of Joktali mauza in 1891 (7,426) has also been deducted, as the mauza no longer forms part of the tahsil. The population of the Athkhel mauza should also have been deducted, but unfortunately it is not known.

† The Kampur mauza (population 9,341 in 1891) has been transferred to the Sibsaigar tahsil. The figures for 1891 have been corrected.

‡ Portions of this mauza, containing in 1891, 2,877 and 1,557 persons have since been transferred to the Lahing and Nakachari mauzas respectively. The figures for 1891 have been corrected.

TABLE III.
Distribution of population—(contd.)

Tahsil or mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
<i>Jorhat Subdivision—(concl'd.)</i>						
Nakachari mauza ...	11,078	8,805	+2,273	24.35	454	3,747
Churamani „ ...	7,832	6,626	+1,206	26.40	296	...
Chaokhat „ ...	16,853	14,976	+1,877	72.10	233	...
Holongapar „ ...	17,240	12,151	+5,089	61.45	280	8,723
Kotahabahoni and Charigaon manzas.	12,200	12,046	+154	19.64	621	...
Hezari „ ...	7,413	6,699	+714	37.40	198	...
Baligaon „ ...	8,111	6,675	+1,436	30.90	262	...
Parbatia „ ...	5,312	4,764	+548	24.50	216	882
Amguri and Khari- katia mauzas.	23,621	16,266	+7,355	118.30	199	10,950
Salmara „ ...	26,456	24,941	+1,515	349.50	75	...
<i>Golaghat Subdivision—</i>						
Golaghat tahsil ...	38,515	31,232	+7,283	178.83	215	11,546
Athgaon tahsil ...	33,488	29,422	+4,066	150.98	221	6,106
Michamara mauza ...	19,040	16,664	+2,376	66.05	288	6,069
Ahataguri „ ...	8,594	7,636	+958	135.60	63	...
Rangamati „ ...	13,016	9,036	+3,980	102.20	127	5,617
Namdayang „ ...	13,135	9,762	+3,373	221.60	59	6,499
Nahraani „ ...	4,175	4,077	+98	12.63	330	64

TABLE III.
Distribution of population—(concl'd.)

Tahsil or mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Population per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
<i>Golaghat Subdivision—(concl'd.)</i>						
Gurjoganma mauza ...	9,731	7,857	+1,874	27.02	360	1,250
Barpathar* „ ...	3,200	1,820	+1,380	...	...	...
Dimapur „ ...	566	303	+263	...	...	...
Duardisa „ ...	3,139	2,171	+968	...	...	...
Barjan „ ...	2,199	...	+2,199	...	...	...
East Rengma „ ...	5,231	7,650	-2,419	...	...	...
West Rengma „ „	10,363	8,603	+1,760	...	...	...
Duar Bagari† „ ...	2,676	2,838	-162	...	...	...
Total district ...	597,969	480,659	+117,310	4,996.00‡	120	147,532

* Barpathar and the following five mauzas have been transferred from the Naga Hills since 1891; the areas are not available.

† This mauza was transferred from Nowgong; the area is not available.

‡ The area of the district was furnished by the Assistant Surveyor-General and does not tally with the sum total of the areas of mauzas and tahsils as the latter figures were obtained from the District Officer.

TABLE IV.
General statistics of population.

Particulars.	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.		JOBHAT SUBDIVISION.		GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
(1901 ...	113,943	97,866	115,079	104,058	87,963	79,060	597,969	316,985	280,984
POPULATION. { 1891 ...	84,243	76,061	95,575	85,577	72,869	66,334	480,659	252,657	227,972
{ 1881 ...	129,166		147,164		115,215		392,545	206,329	186,216
{ 1872 ...	54,304	48,943	61,104	55,752	50,137	47,559	317,799	+165,545	152,254
(1891—1901	+29,700	+21,805	+19,504	+18,481	+15,094	+12,726	+117,310	+64,298	+53,012
VARIA- { 1881—1891	+81,138		+33,988		+22,988		+88,114	+46,358	+41,756
TION. { 1872—1881	+25,919		+30,308		+18,519		+74,746	+40,784	+33,962
1901									
RELIGION—									
Total Hindus ...	105,093	91,825	106,728	97,197	68,099	60,538	529,480	279,923	249,560
Mahapurushias ...	41,062	38,142	41,928	39,661	10,430	9,853	180,996	93,420	87,576

TABLE IV.

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Other Vaish- navas.	18,449	16,442	25,831	23,412	11,99	10,509	106,642	56,279	50,363
Saktists ...	27,519	22,579	24,048	21,917	17,669	15,877	129,639	69,236	60,403
Sivaites ...	1,691	3,481	1,777	643	686	512	8,090	3,454	4,636
Muhamma- dans.	6,362	4,970	3,657	3,016	3,788	3,085	24,878	13,807	11,071
Animistic ...	1,657	449	3,625	3,001	15,506	14,965	39,203	20,788	18,415
Total Christians...	523	399	578	488	283	218	2,489	1,384	1,105
Baptist ...	309	255	331	229	38	9	1,171	678	493
Minor denominations.	104	108	138	201	136	130	817	378	439
Other religions ...	308	223	491	356	287	254	1,919	1,086	833
CIVIL CONDITION—									
Unmarried ...	58,386	44,012	63,634	48,120	47,962	36,126	298,240	160,982	128,258
Married ...	47,810	41,582	43,567	42,662	34,378	33,336	243,335	125,755	117,580
Widowed ...	7,747	12,272	7,878	13,276	5,623	9,598	56,394	21,248	35,146
LITERACY— Literate in Assamese.	3,975	210	5,545	262	3,781	54	13,827	13,301	526
Literate in English.	1,382	44	1,090	287	737	46	3,595	3,218	377
Illiterate ...	107,552	97,514	107,433	103,327	92,806	78,944	577,576	297,791	279,785
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—									
Assamese ...	67,909	59,451	73,181	66,895	45,979	41,569	354,984	187,069	167,913
Eastern Hindi	10,791	7,591	5,262	5,260	5,429	4,360	38,693	21,482	17,211
Bengali ...	23,282	21,804	25,613	22,554	11,653	10,382	115,288	60,548	54,740
Kandhi or Khond	1,159	1,091	364	402	3,761	3,554	10,335	5,284	5,051
Santali ...	1,740	1,266	1,852	1,667	1,556	1,498	9,679	5,148	4,431
Miri ...	1,147	1,927	3,654	3,382	2,244	2,398	14,752	7,045	7,707
Mikir ...	...	...	...	...	11,763	11,040	22,803	11,763	11,040

Note.—Since 1891 Dimapur, Barpathar, Eastern and Western Rengma and Duardisa mauzas have been transferred from the Naga Hills and mauza Duar Bagari from Nowgong to Golaghat subdivision. The figures for 1891, 1881 and 1872 have been corrected accordingly.

TABLE V.
Birth place, race, caste and occupation.

	SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.		JOHAT SUBDIVISION.		GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH PLACE.									
Born in the district ...	73,840	69,108	84,348	78,600	55,989	52,441	414,326	214,177	200,149
" " other parts of Province.	5,294	1,388	2,452	496	12,206	10,195	32,031	19,952	12,079
" " Chota Nagpur	14,972	12,808	14,439	13,600	10,479	9,554	75,852	39,890	35,962
" " other parts of Bengal.	8,848	6,727	6,960	6,036	5,513	4,103	38,217	21,351	16,866
" " United Provinces.	3,918	2,138	671	418	1,107	613	8,865	5,696	3,169
" " Central Provinces.	4,298	3,866	3,915	3,750	965	1,365	18,159	9,178	8,981
" " Nepal	235	85	444	130	527	235	1,656	1,208	450
" " Elsewhere ...	2,538	1,746	1,850	1,028	1,147	554	8,863	5,635	3,328
RACE AND CASTE.									
Ahom ...	36,723	35,212	18,566	12,840	6,611	6,167	111,119	56,900	54,219
Bauri ...	1,900	1,981	1,599	1,579	976	1,177	9,211	4,474	4,737
Bhuiya ...	2,622	2,336	3,376	3,031	3,022	2,457	16,844	9,020	7,824
Bhumij ...	1,920	1,441	1,868	1,704	1,030	907	8,768	4,816	3,952

Boria ...	156	86	1,513	1,404	1,078	1,111	5,348	2,747	2,601
Brahman ...	1,752	1,111	4,027	3,267	2,311	1,970	14,438	8,090	6,348
Chutiya ...	5,377	5,322	13,541	13,029	10,139	9,622	57,030	29,057	27,973
Eurasian ...	8	3	5	2	1	1	20	14	6
European (a) ...	107	27	78	23	80	41	356	265	91
Ganak ...	141	141	655	665	236	159	1,997	1,032	965
Ghatwal ...	1,824	1,731	1,633	1,786	1,290	1,250	9,514	4,747	4,767
Goala ...	1,451	1,135	1,043	830	486	517	5,462	2,980	2,482
Jugi ...	91	51	2,797	2,342	536	474	6,291	3,424	2,867
Kachari ...	3,086	1,263	4,720	3,768	2,230	1,551	16,618	10,036	6,582
Kalita ...	3,546	2,531	10,638	9,458	5,606	4,818	36,627	19,790	16,837
Kamar ...	1,525	1,495	1,551	1,478	1,144	1,093	8,286	4,220	4,066
Kayastha ...	868	772	611	539	599	402	3,791	2,078	1,713
Kewat and Kaibartta ...	3,396	2,617	6,217	5,501	4,411	4,143	26,285	14,024	12,261
Koch and Bajbansi ...	3,629	3,071	6,721	6,081	4,354	3,875	27,731	14,704	13,027
Mikir ...	...	1	1	...	11,686	11,223	22,911	11,637	11,224
Miri ...	2,843	1,939	3,866	3,718	2,663	2,603	17,632	9,372	8,260
Munda ...	3,100	2,757	2,815	2,441	2,633	2,412	16,159	8,548	7,611
Nadiyal ...	2,393	2,495	5,819	5,565	3,603	3,174	23,049	11,815	11,234
Santal ...	3,336	2,982	4,620	4,308	2,352	1,700	19,298	10,308	8,990
Turi ...	996	967	1,049	1,035	801	809	5,657	2,846	2,811
OCCUPATION.									
Workers ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	378,648	211,920	166,726
Dependents ...	...	...	...	...	...	...	219,323	...	...
Total supported :—									
Land-holders ...	68,919	62,379	67,901	64,116	57,638	54,553	375,506	194,458	181,048
Tenants ...	4,041	2,976	5,589	5,016	2,145	1,695	21,462	11,775	9,687
Garden labourers ...	27,153	25,665	28,060	26,586	18,540	18,002	144,006	73,753	70,253
Fishermen ...	649	466	1,951	1,484	872	731	6,153	3,472	2,681
General labourers ..	2,112	801	413	176	301	251	4,054	2,826	1,228

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE V.

TABLE VI.

Vital statistics.

Year.	Population under registration in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox.	Fever.	Bowel complaints.
1901	597,969	26.34	21.71	0.68	0.11	12.73	3.90
1902	Do.	24.46	18.14	0.89	0.03	9.95	3.32
1903	Do.	27.81	18.23	1.21	0.05	9.88	3.17
1904	Do.	29.74	21.11	0.65	0.36	11.46	3.90
1905							
1906							
1907							
1908							
1909							
1910							
1911							
1912							

TABLE

Crop

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...	509,716	526,131	537,457	536,833
Rice ...	316,278	327,472	340,739	345,634
Mustard ...	18,070	19,575	19,537	20,522
Sugarcane ...	6,449	8,031	8,031	7,412
Pulses ...	16,338	15,985	14,047	16,108
All other crops ...	152,581	155,068	155,103	147,157
TEA.				
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.—	1901	1902	1903	1904
Number of gardens ...	58	55	56	56
Area in acres ...	91,001	92,415	98,002	97,444
Area in acres under plant ...	28,645	27,732	27,384	28,076
Outturn in lbs. ...	9,389,797	9,374,395	9,323,430	11,183,233
Labour force ...	33,436	31,518	33,960	33,329
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	2,219	...	2,707	1,413

* Figures for 1903 and subsequent years relate

TABLE VII.

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VII.

statistics.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912

to the period from 1st July to 30th June.

TABLE
Crop

Particulars.	1901.	1902	1903.	1904.
TEA.				
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Number of gardens ...	58	58	57	56
Area in acres ...	90,978	80,085	80,248	82,186
Area in acres under plant ...	30,420	31,167	31,022	30,851
Outturn in lbs. ...	10,241,523	9,805,623	10,743,570	11,172,933
Labour force ...	36,960	37,606	38,513	36,849
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	2,740	...	1,443	2,051
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Number of gardens ...	48	46	46	47
Area in acres ...	62,674	62,500	60,037	58,179
Area in acres under plant ...	20,252	20,453	20,117	20,324
Outturn in lbs. ...	7,168,606	7,142,400	7,803,727	8,025,512
Labour force ...	25,558	24,621	24,496	23,883
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	1,387	...	1,770	1,187
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Number of gardens ...	164	159	159	159
Area in acres ...	244,653	235,000	238,287	237,809
Area in acres { held by Europeans	76,890	76,802	75,967	76,514
under plant { " " natives ...	2,427	2,550	2,556	2,737
Outturn in lbs. ...	26,800,000	26,322,000	27,871,000	30,382,000
Labour force ...	95,954	93,745	96,969	94,061
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.*	6,346	...	5,920	4,651

* Figures for 1903 and subsequent years relate to the period from

TABLE VII.

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VII.

statistics.

1905.	
1906.	
1907.	
1908.	
1909.	
1910.	
1911.	
1912.	

TABLE
Reserved

Name of reserve.		Area in square miles.	Rs.			
			1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
GOLAGHAT RANGE.	{ Mikir Hills ...	81	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	6	223
	{ Kalioni ...	81	143	80	32	460
	{ Upper Daigurung	8	<i>Nil.</i>	1	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>
	{ Lower Do. ...	8	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	1	<i>Nil.</i>
	{ Nambar ...	387	1,695	7,455	7,793	4,146
	{ Diphu ...	66	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	274	700
	{ Rengma ...	54	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>
	{ Doiang ...	95	178	259	476	386
JORHAT RANGE.	{ Disai ...	11	1,178	2,656	3,460	652
	{ Holongapar ...	8	66	301	613	166
	{ Disai valley ...	63	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	1,196	<i>Nil.</i>
SIBSAGAR RANGE.	{ Abhaipur ...	26	<i>Nil.</i>	<i>Nil.</i>	94	<i>Nil.</i>
	{ Sola ...	3	47	225	365	5
	{ Pantidihingia ...	30	338	924	688	529
	{ Dirai ...	18	132	43	184	50

TABLE VIII.

VIII.

forests.

CEIPTS.

1904-05.	Rs.
1905-06.	Rs.
1906-07.	Rs.
1907-08.	Rs.
1908-09.	Rs.
1909-10.	Rs.
1910-11.	Rs.
1911-12.	Rs.

TABLE

Outturn of timber and fuel and

[The figures include details for the Disai Valley Reserve]

Details.			1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Reserved forests						
Area	sq. miles	...	876	939	939	939
Outturn (Govt. and purchasers only).						
Timber	c. ft.	...	62,679	170,047	150,972	55,721
Fuel	c. ft.	...	400	192	100	...
Unclassed State forests.						
Area	sq. miles	...	2,801	2,867	2,839	3,091
Outturn (Govt. and purchasers only).						
Timber	c. ft.	...	161,681	97,115	94,670	60,430
Fuel	c. ft.	...	92,362	137,794	55,732	51,649
Rubber	Rs.	...	1,882	110	241	691
Forest receipts	Rs.	...	31,656	33,490	35,235	22,988
Forest expenditure	Rs.	...	20,949	21,214	28,597	31,189
Surplus or deficit	Rs.	...	+10,707	+12,276	+6,638	-8,201

IX.

value of minor forest produce.

In the Naga Hills which is worked from Sibsagar.]

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE X.
*Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee
 at selected marts.*

			SIBSAGAR.			JORHAT.			GOLAGHAT.			
			Common rice	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	
1880	{	2nd week of February	...	14	6½	10	...	...	...	...	...	
		Do. do. of August	...	14	6½	10	...	...	...	...	...	
1890	{	Do. do. of February	...	20	8	15	16	8	16	16	8	13
		Do. do. of August	...	13	8	13	12½	8½	15	13	8	13
1900	{	Do. do. of February	...	13	9	13	12	9	13	12	8	12
		Do. do. of August	...	10½	8	10½	11	9	10½	10	8	11
1901	{	Do. do. of February	...	11½	8½	12	9	9	11	12	8	11
		Do. do. of August	...	8	8½	11	8	8	11	8	8	8
1902	{	Do. do. of February	...	13	8½	11	10½	8	12	12	8	11
		Do. do. of August	...	8	8	12½	8	9	12	8	8	11
1903	{	Do. do. of February	...	13	9	11	10	9	11	12	8	10½
		Do. do. of August	...	11	10½	12	9	11	11	12	10½	11
1904	{	Do. do. of February	...	14	11	13	13	11	11½	14	10	11
		Do. do. of August	...	13	11	13	12	11	12	12	10½	11
1905	{	Do. do. of February	...	16	11	13½	13½	11	13	15	10½	11
		Do. do. of August	...									
1906	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1907	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1908	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1909	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1910	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1911	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									
1912	{	Do. do. of February	...									
		Do. do. of August	...									

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159	16	13	11	9	12	12
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	5	3	5	4	4	4
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	4	3	6	5	7	5
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 233 and 335.	15	9	18	11	21	13
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	4	3	5	3	3	3
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	4	3	6	4	6	5
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—40.	25	11	17	3	5	5
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	47	9	44	8	46	12
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	3	...	1	...	5	5

TABLE XI.

XI.

Civil Justice by Subdivisions.

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION—(conold.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	...	...	1	1
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	113	32	85	44	87	36
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	25	25	8	8	9	6
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	11	2	15	6	10	5
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	4	3	5	3	4	4
Total ...	276	116	226	108	220	116
JORHAT SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	10	5	5	3	2	2
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	3	3	8	5	8	6
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308, and 396.	2	...	2	2	3	3
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333, and 335.	11	5	13	10	19	12

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	2	1	4	2	...	..
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	4	3	4	2	8	5
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397, and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—33, and 435—40.	10	2	9	2	6	2
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455, and 457—460.	71	18	77	17	80	22
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	3	...	3	2	5	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379,—382	91	29	95	47	87	37
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	28	24	21	16	19	18
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448	12	6	7	6	9	1
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	2	...	2	...	2	2
Total	249	96	250	114	248	110

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	4	2	3	2	6	6
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	3	3	4	2	6	6
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	4	...	1	1	2	2
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324, 326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	9	9	15	7	8	5
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	2	...	2	2	2	2
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	3	1	1	1	5	1
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—33 and 435—40.	12	...	15	6	20	1
(ix) House-breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	35	7	45	6	54	9
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	4	1	4	2	3	2

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and Civil Justice by Subdivisions—(continued).

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of Crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	1	...	...	...	...	...
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	98	22	75	35	94	26
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	18	14	22	21	30	28
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	13	5	10	5	4	3
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	...	...	5	3	10	5
Total ...	206	64	202	93	244	96
DISTRICT TOTAL.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	30	20	19	14	20	20
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	11	9	17	11	18	16
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	10	3	9	8	12	10
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	35	23	46	28	48	30

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	8	4	11	7	5	5
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	11	7	11	7	19	11
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433, and 435—440.	47	13	41	11	31	8
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	153	34	166	31	180	43
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	10	1	8	4	13	7
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	1	...	...	...	1	1
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382	302	83	255	126	268	99
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	71	63	51	45	58	52
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	36	13	32	17	23	9
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	6	3	12	6	16	11
Total	731	276	678	315	712	322
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and movables	...	2,026	...	1,982	...	...
Title and other suits	...	156	...	183	...	...
Rent suits	...	82	...	79	...	...
Total	...	2,264	...	2,244	...	...

TABLE
Fluctuations in
Proportion of fluctuating area to settled area

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION—				
Settled area ...	261,612	265,361	267,041	276,082
Area excluded from settlement	4,590	3,994	5,830	2,310
Area included in settlement ..	7,282	7,307	7,443	11,222
Revenue demand Rs. ...	4,85,900	4,95,055	5,04,592	5,28,589
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Settled area ...	292,828	296,116	299,380	305,079
Area excluded from settlement	8,599	7,904	7,045	6,815
Area included in settlement ...	10,936	5,629	10,093	12,132
Revenue demand Rs. ...	5,09,669	5,16,915	5,23,514	5,36,380
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Settled area ...	188,088	192,086	196,539	196,228
Area excluded from settlement	5,603	6,833	2,893	9,412
Area included in settlement ...	8,013	9,562	7,641	9,038
Revenue demand Rs. ...	3,76,724	3,82,774	3,91,021	3,91,364
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Settled area ...	742,528	753,563	762,960	777,389
Area excluded from settlement	18,792	18,731	15,768	18,537
Area included in settlement	26,231	22,498	25,177	32,392
Revenue demand Rs. ...	13,72,203	13,94,744	14,19,127	14,56,333

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settled area.

in 1903-04	{	Sibsagar	... 0·1 per cent.
		Jorhat	... 15·4 "
		Golaghat	... 8·5 "

Acres.	1904-05.
Acres.	1905-06.
Acres.	1906-07.
Acres.	1907-08.
Acres.	1908-09.
Acres.	1909-10.
Acres.	1910-11.
Acres.	1911-12.

TABLE
Finance—

Principal heads of revenue.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary)	8,11,301	13,95,976	13,73,341	14,02,333	14,22,045
" " (miscellaneous.)	32,683	45,199	45,796	43,289	48,687
Provincial rates ...	59,620	1,02,570	1,01,129	1,04,571	98,123
Judicial stamps ...	35,941	58,900	58,848	56,119	58,933
Non-judicial stamps...	10,561	17,894	16,300	18,798	18,413
Opium	4,86,806	4,71,344	4,58,364	4,73,098	4,89,356
Country spirits ...	69,088	1,42,814	1,49,147	1,48,638	1,38,295
Ganja	22,206	62,633	63,259	65,216	68,967
Other heads of excise	4,326	4,033	4,578	4,472	4,175
Assessed taxes ...	25,797	42,469	43,118	44,446	35,132
No. of assesses per $\frac{0}{\infty}$	2	2	2	2	1
Forests	13,501	31,656	33,490	35,235	22,988
Registration ...	1,294	1,950	1,862	1,839	1,895
Total ...	15,73,124	23,77,438	23,49,232	23,98,054	24,07,059

TABLE XIII.

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XIII.

Receipts.

1904-05.	Rs.
1905-06.	Rs.
1906-07.	Rs.
1907-08.	Rs.
1908-09.	Rs.
1909-10.	Rs.
1910-11.	Rs.
1911-12.	Rs.

TABLE
Miscellaneous

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION—	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Elephants	...	...	...	880
Fisheries	16,309	14,727	14,836	12,063
Total revenue ...	19,663	17,648	16,163	13,378
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Fisheries	18,025	19,412	19,107	16,954
Total revenue ...	18,503	19,590	19,327	17,171
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Elephants	...	...	...	10,176
Fisheries	1,824	1,502	1,179	1,400
House tax	5,057	6,119	6,484	5,983
Total revenue ...	7,033	8,558	7,809	18,138
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Elephants	...	...	...	11,056
Fisheries	36,158	35,641	35,122	30,417
House tax	5,057	6,119	6,484	5,983
Other heads	3,984	4,036	1,683	1,231
Total revenue ...	45,199	45,796	43,289	48,687

TABLE
Land

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acre.	Acre.	Acre.	Acre.
SIBSAGAE SUBDIVISION—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	154,794	158,351	162,242	171,801
Held on ordinary tenure ...	153,372	156,929	160,820	170,392
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj)...	711	711	711	711
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj).	711	711	711	698
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	105,439	105,632	103,413	102,861
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	40,482	40,482	40,482	40,482
Area settled under other special rules.	5,073	5,073	5,073	5,073
Area settled on 30 years' lease...	43,994	44,307	42,095	41,420
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	15,890	15,770	15,763	15,886
Total land settled under other tenures.	1,379	1,378	1,386	1,420
Total settled area of subdivision ...	261,612	265,361	267,041	276,082
Total unsettled area of subdivision	482,068	478,319	476,639	467,598
JORHAT SUBDIVISION —				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops	198,914	202,055	205,114	210,221
Held on ordinary tenure ...	161,054	164,195	166,923	172,030
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj)...	36,088	36,088	36,419	36,419
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj).	1,772	1,772	1,772	1,772
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	93,607	93,754	93,959	94,551
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	59,216	59,152	59,146	59,146
Area settled under other special rules.	344	344	344	344
Area settled on 30 years' lease	9,425	9,696	9,948	9,848
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	24,623	24,562	24,621	25,213
Total land settled under other tenures.	307	307	307	307
Total settled area of subdivision ...	292,828	296,116	299,380	305,079
Total unsettled area of subdivision.	231,332	228,044	224,780	219,081

TABLE XV.

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xv.

Tenures.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.

TABLE
Land

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02	1902 03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	120,281	122,597	126,777	126,370
Held on ordinary tenure ...	115,808	118,124	122,304	121,897
Held revenue free (lakhiraj) ...	1,965	1,965	1,965	1,965
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj)	2,508	2,508	2,508	2,508
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	67,452	69,134	69,411	69,508
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	24,942	24,942	24,942	24,942
Area settled under other special rules.	503	503	503	503
Area settled on 30 years' lease	22,216	23,798	24,201	24,201
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	19,791	19,891	19,765	19,862
Total land settled under other tenures.	355	355	351	350
Total settled area of subdivision ...	188,088	192,086	1,96,539	196,228
Total unsettled area of subdivision	1,741,403	1,737,405	1,732,952	1,733,263
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops.	473,989	483,003	494,133	5,08,392
Held on ordinary tenure ...	430,234	439,248	450,047	464,319
Held revenue free (lakhiraj)	38,764	38,764	39,095	39,095
Held at half rates (nisfi-khiraj).	4,991	4,991	4,991	4,978
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples.	266,498	268,520	266,783	266,920
Area of fee-simple and commuted grants.	124,639	124,576	124,570	124,570
Area settled under other special rules.	5,920	5,920	5,920	5,920
Area settled on 30 years' lease...	75,635	77,801	76,144	75,469
Area settled under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years' lease.	60,304	60,223	60,149	60,961
Total land settled under other tenures.	2,041	2,040	2,044	2,077
Total settled area of the district ...	742,528	753,563	762,960	777,389
Total unsettled area of the district	2,454,803	2,443,768	2,434,371	2,420,331

TABLE XVA.

Unsettled area in each tahsil and mauza in 1903-04.

	Total area.	Un- settled area.	REMARKS.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION—			
Tahsils—Namtidol ...	116	34	
Sibsagar ...	160	89	
Mauzas—Abhaipur ...	220	155	Includes 26 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Athkhel ...	61	20	
Dhopabar ...	43	12	
Hachara ...	14	3	
Joktali ...	19	3	
Khalaighogora ...	114	77	Includes 18 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Nazira ...	16	2	Includes 3 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Silakuti ...	54	22	Includes 30 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Thaura Panidihing ...	154	122	
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—			
Tahsil—Jorhat ...	144	21	
Mauzas—Baligaon ...	31	11	
Chaokhat ...	37	18	
Gakhirkhoa ...	18	3	
Hezari ...	37	26	
Holongapar ...	61	14	Includes 8 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Katabagar Charigaon ...	20	2	
Kharikatia Amguri ...	118	50	
Lahing ...	59	35	
Nakachari ...	50	17	Includes 11 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Parbatia ...	25	13	
Salmarā ...	349	293	
Simaluguri ...	26	12	
Teok ...	35	22	
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—			
Tahsils—Athgaon ...	151	66	Includes 10 sq. miles of reserved forest.
Golaghat ...	179	88	
Mauzas—Ahataguri ...	135	123	
Barpathar ...	Not known.		
Barjan ...	Do.		
Dergaon ...	17 1/2	6	
Dimapur ...	Not known.		
Duar Bagari ...	202 1/2	202	There are only 123 acres of settled land.
Duar Disa ...	Not known.		
Gurjogania ...	27 1/2	7	
Kardaiguri ...	Not known.		
Michamara ...	49	30	
Naharani ...	13	3	
Namdayang ...	222	191	
Naojan ...	Not known.		
Rangamati ...	101 1/2	79	
Rengma (Eastern and Western).	Not known.		
Rengmapathar ...	Do.		

TABLE
Ex-

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	69	75	72	72
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	37,049	36,762	43,203	45,388
	M. s.	M. s.	M. s.	M. s.
Opium issued ...	177 3	174 27	175 22	179 27
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	2,01,865-8-0	1,99,130	2,00,127	2,01,830
Number of ganja shops ...	12	12	12	12
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	14,065	15,259	14,530	15,244
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	35 1 4	30 25 8	35	33 11 8
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	11,869	11,031	12,600	13,421
Number of country spirit shops.	12	12	12	12
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	56,880	56,806	56,178	54,830
Number of distilleries ...				
Amount of liquor issued...				
Still-head duty ... Rs.				
Number of retail shops ...				
Amount paid for licenses Rs.				
Other heads of excise revenue. Rs.	1,897	2,219	2,074	2,032
JORHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	59	59	60	60
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	17,345	15,846	17,393	17,274
	M. s.	M. s.	M. s.	M. s.
Opium issued ...	97 17	91 28	93 32	96 28
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	1,11,064-8-0	1,04,538	1,06,932	1,10,238
Number of ganja shops...	15	16	16	16
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	14,138	13,480	13,388	14,614
	M. s.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued	29 3	28 27 2	28 37 8	24 30 8
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	10,141	10,324	10,484	9,987
Number of country spirit shops.	10	10	10	10
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	51,700	57,191	57,150	54,345
Number of distilleries ...				
Amount of liquor issued...				
Still-head duty ... Rs.				
Number of retail shops ...				
Amount paid for licenses Rs.				
Other heads of excise revenue. Rs.	1,136	1,056	1,158	1,090
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops...	50	55		54
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	14,644	15,790		14,583
	M. s.	M. s.		M. s.
Opium issued ...	78 16	75 28		85 5
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	89,376	86,298		97,043

TABLE XVI.

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XVI.

cise.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.

TABLE

Ex

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Number of ganja shops	7	9	9	9
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	7,148	8,213	7,840	8,872
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued	14 25 8	13 28 8	17 26	17 37 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	5,272	4,952	6,374	6,829
Number of country spirit shops.	10	11	11	9
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	34,234	35,150	35,310	29,120
Number of distilleries...				
Amount of liquor issued				
Still-head duty ... Rs.				
Number of retail shops...				
Amount paid for licenses Rs.				
Other heads of excise revenue. ... Rs.	1,000	1,303	1,240	1,053
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Number of opium shops	178	189	189	186
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	69,038	68,398	76,378	77,245
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	352 36 0	342 3 0	348 0 0	361 20 0
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	4,02,306	3,89,966	3,96,720	4,12,111
Number of ganja shops...	34	37	37	37
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	35,351	36,952	35,758	38,730
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued...	78 29 12	73 1 2	81 23 8	75 39 0
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	27,282	26,307	29,458	30,237
Number of country spirit shops.	32	33	33	31
Amount paid for licenses Rs.	1,42,814	1,49,147	1,48,638	1,38,295
Number of distilleries ...				
Amount of liquor issued				
Still-head duty ... Rs.				
Number of retail shops...				
Amount paid for licenses Rs.				
Other heads of excise revenue ... Rs.	4,033	4,578	4,472	4,175

TABLE XVI.

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XVI.

cise—(concluded).

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.

TABLE XVII.
Income and expenditure of Local Boards.
Sibsagar.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	20,154	35,550	Post office ...	464	1,294
Police ...	3,202	3,994	Administration ...	170	170
Tolls on ferries ...	5,527	8,200	Education ...	6,785	9,713
Contributions ...	14,914	14,000	Medical ...	1,050	2,220
Debt ...	...	2,019	Civil works ...	29,796	53,433
Miscellaneous ...	1,009	1,685	Debt ...	...	1,686
			Miscellaneous ...	1,340	564
Total ...	44,806	65,458	Total ...	39,905	69,080

Jorhat.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	23,248	40,745	Post office ...	572	941
Police ...	1,871	3,816	Administration ...	105	105
Tolls on ferries ...	4,153	4,630	Education ...	5,298	10,276
Contributions ...	7,248	5,000	Medical ...	576	2,331
Debt ...	...	2,985	Civil works ...	24,515	52,548
Miscellaneous ...	1,209	2,839	Debt ...	...	3,089
			Miscellaneous ...	1,411	808
Total ...	37,729	59,945	Total ...	32,477	70,098

TABLE XVII.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards—(concluded).
Golaghat.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	16,186	26,311	Post office ...	402	2,052
Police ...	1,604	3,259	Administration ...	83	83
Tolls on ferries ...	1,849	454	Education ...	3,725	7,512
Contributions ...	8,654	6,660	Medical ...	793	3,749
Debt ...	...	1,959	Civil works ...	18,224	27,963
Miscellaneous ...	129	73	Debt ...	...	1,371
			Miscellaneous ...	1,084	826
Total ...	28,422	38,716	Total ...	24,311	43,556

TABLE XVIII.

Municipal.

Sibsagar Station.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	194	315	Administration ...	498	669
Tax on houses and lands.	2,051	2,854	Conservancy ...	904	3,386
Pounds ...	1,687	1,346	Public works ...	3,883	4,128
Fees from markets...	648	1,205	Public instruction...	450	696
Grants from Govt. and Local Funds.	3,000	5,000	Drainage ...	247	250
Other sources ...	1,381	1,273	Other heads ...	2,244	2,783
			Closing balance ...	730	171
Total ...	8,961	11,993	Total ...	8,961	11,993

TABLE XVIII.
Municipal—(concluded).
Jorhat Union.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	953	3,969	Administration ...	480	516
Tax on houses and lands.	922	180	Conservancy ...	586	1,464
Pounds ...	1,699	1,273	Public works ...	1,600	2,290
Fees from markets ...	680	1,434	Public instruction...	120	371
Grants from Govt. and Local Funds.	1,000	2,000	Drainage ...	793	185
Tax on persons ...	...	1,302	Other heads ...	1,041	2,665
Other sources ...	89	318	Closing balance ...	723	2,985
Total ...	5,343	10,476	Total ...	5,343	10,476

Golaghat Union.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	319	3,383	Administration ...	276	574
Tax on houses and lands.	1,010	240	Conservancy ...	565	1,277
Pounds ...	2,140	1,506	Public works ...	1,939	1,097
Fees from markets...	1,560	1,466	Public instruction...	272	496
Grants from Govt. and Local Funds.	800	1,500	Drainage ...	167	206
Tax on persons ...	...	967	Other heads ...	1,766	1,432
Other sources ...	195	148	Closing balance ...	1,039	4,188
Total ...	6,024	9,210	Total ...	6,024	9,210

TABLE XIX.
Strength of Police Force.

Particulars.				1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.						
SUPERVISING STAFF						
District and Assistant Superintendents	...	...	...	1	1	1
Inspectors	...	...	...	3	3	3
SUBORDINATE STAFF.						
Sub-Inspectors	...	...	...	5	4	15
Head Constables	...	...	...	13	29	26
Constables	...	...	...	90	202	269
Union and Municipal Police	...	...	...	7	8	8
Total expenditure	...	...	Rs.	37,442	46,907	70,950

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.

As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XX.
Police Stations and Outposts in 1904.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.				SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
				Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
SIBSAGAR SUBDIVISION.	{	Bartala P. S.	...	2	...	11	13
	{	Sibsagar P. S.	...	3	1	15	19
	{	Sonari O. P.	...	1	...	8	9
JORHAT SUBDIVISION.	{	Jorhat P. S.	...	4	1	20	25
	{	Majuli O. P.	...	1	...	4	6
	{	Seleng O. P.	...	1	...	8	9
GOLAGHAT SUBDIVISION.	{	Bokakhat O. P.	...	1	...	4	6
	{	Dergaon O. P.	...	1	...	5	6
	{	Dimapur O. P.	...	1	...	4	5
	{	Golaghat P. S.	...	3	1	15	19

TABLE XXI.
Jail Statistics.
 Sibsagar Jail.

			1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male	...	40	55	59
	{ Female	...	1	2	1
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	...	...	24	35	...
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	...	3,819	5,386	5,634
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	...	...	40	43	47
Profits on jail manufacture	...	...	2,082	1,821	36
Earnings per prisoner†	...	...	56	38	1

Jorhat Subsidiary Jail.

			1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male	...	16	20	20
	{ Female	...	1	1	1
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	...	...	60	...	93
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	...	1,647	1,679	1,252
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	...	...	41	37	41
Profits on jail manufacture	...	...	847	498	659
Earnings per prisoner†	...	...	56	30	39

Golaghat Subsidiary Jail.

			1881	1891	1901.
Average daily population	{ Male	...	14	20	21
	{ Female	...	1	1	1
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000	...	...	68	190	46
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	...	1,971	1,820	1,275
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)	...	...	67	44	44
Profits on jail manufacture	...	...	...	410	890
Earnings per prisoner †	...	...	...	26	47

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE
Educa

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>High Schools.</i>				
Number ...	5	5	6	6
Number of boys reading in High Schools.	200	206	213	249
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	276	286	382	414
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes.	622	585	781	760
<i>Middle English Schools.</i>				
Number ...	7	7	7	7
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	102	103	55	82
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes.	551	552	493	464
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools.</i>				
Number ...	2	2	2	2
Number of boys reading in Middle School Classes.	28	31	14	19
Number of boys reading in Primary Classes.	148	155	176	154
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools.</i>				
Number ...	7	7	6	5
Number of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes.	65	63	54	37
Number of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes.	256	278	237	171
<i>Lower Primary Schools.</i>				
Number ...	302	311	300	290
Number of boys reading in three Upper Classes.	(a)9,157	(a)9,797	3,525	3,959
Number of boys reading in Lower Classes.			6,370	5,902
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools	19	19	14	7
Number of girls reading (whether in Girls' or Boys' Schools) in High Schools.	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools	1	...	1	...
Middle Vernacular Schools	...	1	2	2
Upper Primary Schools	14	7	7	...
Lower Primary Schools	618	606	409	234

(a) Separate figures

XXII.

tion.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

not available.

TABLE XXIII.
Educational Finance.

Particulars.	No. of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM					Amount per head of scholar.	
		Provincial revenue.	District and muni- cipal funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.		
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	a. p.
Training and Special Schools	...	1,114	563	140	...	1,817	72	10 10
<i>Secondary Boys' Schools—</i>								
Upper (High) ...	5	647	...	21,061	3	21,711	20	0 5
Lower (Middle) ...	9	1,261	1,944	4,287	779	8,271	11	2 5
<i>Primary Boys' Schools—</i>								
Upper ...	7	...	817	399	275	1,491	5	5 2
Lower ...	302	...	20,087	1,491	24	21,602	2	8 9
<i>Girls' Schools</i>	19	...	1,400	...	44	1,444	4	7 3
Total	345	3,022	24,811	27,378	1,125	56,336	5	2 6

TABLE
Medi

Particulars.	SIBSAGAR.			JOR	
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.
Number of dispensaries ...	1	1	2	1	1
Daily average number of in-door patients.	6.23	8.84	55.50	3.89	7.01
Daily average number of out-door patients.	27.91	28.03	73.31	32.15	14.27
Cases treated ...	3,274	7,741	20,148	5,287	4,381
Operations performed ...	189	212	255	366	74
Total income ... Rs. ...	1,618	4,011	8,585	1,431	2,931
Income from Government Rs. ...	499	1,172	2,174	755	96
Income from Local and Municipal Funds Rs. ...	6.9	950	2,100	...	920
Subscriptions ... Rs. ...	498	360	363	677	513
Total expenditure ... Rs. ...	1,582	3,908	8,569	1,431	2,920
Expenditure on establishment Rs.	756	1,411	2,592	1,002	396
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated					Not
Cost per case ... Rs. ...					Do.

TABLE XXIV.

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XXIV.

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HAT.	GOLAGHAT.			TOTAL DISTRICT.		
1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.
2	...	1	2	2	3	6
7·96	...	4·47	8·94	10·12	20·32	72·40
94·33	...	22·23	38·76	60·06	64·53	206·40
22,785	...	7,098	8,832	8,561	19,220	51,765
206	...	74	193	555	360	654
6,218	...	1,785	5,443	3,049	8,727	20,246
612	...	168	652	1,254	1,436	3,438
2,541	...	540	2,610	609	2,410	7,301
680	...	258	409	1,175	1,131	1,452
6,170	...	1,722	5,442	3,013	8,550	20,181
1,228	...	454	1,313	1,758	2,261	5,133
available.				12·76	40·44	48·82
do.				...	0·1·5	0·1·0

TABLE
Dispen

Name of Dispen- sary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Sibsagar ...	4,490	11,934	7,289	14,046	4,370	16,313	4,246	16,478	3,911	18,109		
Jhansi ...	1,326	6,888	1,280	6,102	771	7,068	1,303	7,555	1,452	11,047		
Jorhat ...	4,003	11,598	4,281	17,648	2,738	17,656	3,260	19,476	3,255	25,142		
Titabar ...	1,571	5,203	1,689	5,137	1,274	5,825	1,173	6,695	1,871	7,528		
Golaghat...	2,547	6,918	3,800	7,174	2,128	9,246	1,679	11,091	2,185	13,157		
Dimapur ...	1,508	1,702	1,643	1,658	1,060	1,760	1,378	2,237	1,263	2,966		
Dergaon ...	...	...	...	...	371	9,858	975	11,131	1,503	11,434		

TABLE XXV.

XXV.
saries.

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IN THE GORGE OF THE SUBANSIRI.

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME VIII

LAKHIMPUR

BY

B. C. ALLEN, c.s.

Calcutta :

PRINTED AT THE CITY PRESS,
12, BENTINCK STREET.

1905.

Price, Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



J. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.



To those unacquainted with Assam it may perhaps seem strange that no directory should be attached to the Gazetteer of Lakhimpur. There is, however, only one town, Dibrugarh, within the district, and Dibrugarh has been described at length. One green village is very like another green village, and none possess such distinctive characteristics as would justify a separate and detailed description. Reference has, however, been made to all villages, which are noted either as trade centres of importance or as the seats of some particular industry. My acknowledgments are due to Major Cole, Deputy Commissioner of the district, who has been so good as to examine the Gazetteer in proof.

B. C. ALLEN.

SHILLONG, *June 16th, 1905.*

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and Boundaries—General Aspects—The North Bank—Mountain System—River System—Identity of Brahmaputra with Sangpo—Other Rivers—Lakes and Marshes—Geology—Climate—Fauna.

The district of Lakhimpur is bounded on the north ^{Area and Boundaries.} by the Himalayas, on the west by the Himalayas and Darrang, on the south by Sibsagar and by hills inhabited by independent Nagas, and on the east by hilly country, inhabited by savage tribes. On three sides it marches with territory that is not in the occupation of any civilized or even semi-civilized power, and the frontier has accordingly never been definitely defined. An Inner Line has been laid down under the provisions of Regulation V of 1873, which serves to mark the administrative boundary of the district. But, though for a short distance this line runs along the north bank of the Brahmaputra, the foot of the hills has always been accepted as the limit of British territory; and on the eastern and southern frontiers our officers are in the habit of getting their orders carried out, without having to resort to force, for some considerable distance beyond the Inner Line. The district as defined by the Inner Line is situated between 26°, 49' and 27°, 52' N., and 93°, 46' and 96°, 05' E., and covers an area of 4,529

square miles. Measured on a more liberal scale it lies between 26°, 50' and 28°, 17' N., and 93°, 46' and 97°, 15' E., and covers an area of 10,327 square miles.

**General
Aspects.**

Lakhimpur consists of a broad plain lying on either side of the Brahmaputra, bounded on three sides by hills. To the south these hills are only a few thousand feet above the level of the sea, and their sides are for the most part clothed in dense tropical forest. They lie in tumbled ridges, sharply serrated at the summit, and sloping steeply to the valleys with which they are intersected, and each of the main ridges is buttressed with spurs thrown out on either side. The hills that shut in the eastern end of the valley are considerably higher, and, on a clear day, the view to the north and east is bounded by a continuous chain of snowy peaks, which, if low in comparison with the giants of the Himalaya, attain at any rate the altitude of Mont Blanc. Along the north the nearer ranges are generally high enough to conceal the eternal snows beyond. North of North Lakhimpur, there are points in this chain which are nearly 10,000 feet above the level of the sea, but a little to the east of the Subansiri the level falls, and the outer hills are not more than two or three thousand feet in height. This, however, is not for far, and the level quickly rises to six or seven thousand feet near the gorge of the Dihang.

South of the Brahmaputra the plain is fairly high, and a broad belt of country along the foot of the hills is clothed in dense evergreen forest. Creepers spread in every direction over the larger trees, knitting them

into one great mass of foliage, and drop down here and there in graceful coils and loops. The forest is dense with bamboos, plantains, palms, and huge tree ferns; and the creeping cane, its sharp spikes hidden by its beautiful green leaves, acts as an effectual check on any one who lightly tries to penetrate these sylvan fastnesses. In the centre of the district much of the forest has been felled, and the plain is covered with fields of waving rice, or with stiff tea bushes ranged in rows with mathematical precision, and pruned down with equal accuracy to the same level. The planter's bungalow, the factory, and the cooly lines stand out above these even rows of shrubs; and it must be admitted that except for the patches of forest kept as a fuel reserve, and the avenues of trees which are often planted along the roads of the estate, there is little of the picturesque or beautiful in these plantations. The drainage of the country is carried off in small streams and *jans* which feed the larger rivers, and there are comparatively few swamps and *bhils* even in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra.

North of that great river the condition of affairs is somewhat different. A large portion of the country is still covered with tree forest, the level of the land is lower, and there are more *bhils* and marshes; while much of the country is exposed to inundation in the rainy season, and is covered with dense masses of grass and reeds, ranging from ten to twenty feet in height. The general effect is extremely picturesque. In the foreground are to be seen fields of waving rice, of a

The north
bank.

vivid green during the summer season, but changing to a rich gold as harvest time draws near. Round the edges of these rice *pathars* are groves of slender palms, broad-leaved plantains, and feathery bamboos, which conceal the cottages of the cultivators, while further back is often to be seen the dark green line of the primeval forest. The view is bounded to the north by the bluest of blue hills, whose sides are for the most part clothed with trees, though here and there are patches of white rock, where the cliff is too precipitous to afford a lodging for a plant or sapling, even in that rainy climate. In the far distance to the east there are ranges of high hills, whose peaks are covered with snow, and whose rocky sides are flecked with gleaming white. At all seasons of the year the country looks fresh, and cool, and green. The trees in the forest never lose their leaves, while the roads are often carpeted with grass, and bordered with ferns that recall the lanes of Devonshire.

Between Dibrugarh and Sadiya, the country north of the Brahmaputra is clothed with forest right to the foot of the hills, and is almost entirely destitute of inhabitants. Sadiya itself is a country of rivers, forest, and jungle, with patches of high ground covered with short springy turf. The road to Bomjur, our furthest outpost on the north, runs for the greater part of the way through a magnificent forest of gigantic trees. On one side there are glimpses of the great Dibang, here gliding gently along over some deep stretch of water, and anon rushing hurriedly down a

rapid, and foaming and roaring round some rock or sunken tree. On the other side can be seen the rugged mass of Sadiya peak, its grey sides flecked with snow, while in front, the blue hills rise in tumbled masses from the valley, their sides covered with a dense growth of trees.

Although Lakhimpur is surrounded on three sides by mountains, almost the whole of the area included within the Inner Line consists of a flat and level plain. An out-lying spur of the Naga Hills stretches from the Disang river through the south of the Jaipur and Tipling mauzas, and the Inner Line near Margherita has recently been thrown back to the Tirap, so as to include a few of the lower ranges of the Naga Hills. But apart from these mountains and a few isolated hills in the Makum and Buri Dihing mauzas, there is nothing to break the even level of the plain.

The principal river of Lakhimpur, as of every other district of the Assam Valley, is the Brahmaputra, but in this district it possesses a peculiar interest from the fact that it is here that it passes out of the regions of geography, and its true course becomes to some extent a matter of uncertainty. Hindu tradition describes the river as rising in the sacred pool of Brahmakund, some three or four days' journey east of Sadiya; but tradition can hardly be accepted by the geographer as scientific fact. The river that flows from the east has been followed far beyond the Brahmakund to the Rima Valley, where it is known as the Zayul Chu, and it is now generally believed that this river is only a

Mountain
system.

River
system.
The Brahma-
putra: its
identity with
the Gange.

tributary of the mighty Brahmaputra, and not the main channel of its waters. The Brahmaputra is supposed to be identical with the Sangpo of Thibet, which rises in $31^{\circ} 30' \text{ N.}$ and 82° E. , near the upper waters of the Indus and the Sutlej, a little to the east of the Manasarowar lakes. It has been traced almost continuously for a distance of 850 miles eastwards to Gya-la-Sindong, which is barely 150 miles from the Assam Frontier, but no explorer has yet succeeded in following the river right down to its junction with the Brahmaputra. It was at one time thought that the Sangpo might be identical with the Irawadi, but explorations which terminated in 1882, showed that the Sangpo could not flow east of Sama. It was then suggested that the river which flows past Sama was not identical with the stream that runs eastward from Sadiya to the Brahmakund, but was a tributary of the Sangpo, which flowed to the west of Sama into the plains of Burma. This theory was completely disproved by the explorations of Mr. Needham, who, in 1885-86, marched from Sadiya up the so-called Brahmaputra to Rima, a village east of Sama, and proved that the river at Rima, and the river that flowed past Sadiya are the same.

The Sangpo being denied an outlet towards Burma in any direction, the weight of evidence would suggest that it is identical with the Brahmaputra. Granted this premise, it seems probable that the channel by which it makes its way through the Himalayas is the Dihang, which is the largest river that falls into the Brahmaputra from the north, and at the point

of junction considerably exceeds in volume the river to which the Assamese have erroneously applied that name. In 1886-87 the Sangpo was visited by a native explorer, who stated that he followed its course nearly 100 miles south of Gya-la-Sindong, to a place called Onlet, which is only 8 miles from Miri Padam and 43 miles from the Assam Frontier; but it has not been found possible to check or confirm his report in any way.

The banks of the Brahmaputra are, as a rule, higher in Lakhimpur than in the districts lower down the valley, and in places they are covered with tree forest. Between the main banks there is a wide strath, in which the river oscillates from side to side, throwing out here and there divergent channels which after a time rejoin the parent stream. The waters of the river are heavily laden with suspended matter, and the smallest obstruction in the current is liable to give rise to an almond shaped sand bank. The next flood may wash this bank away or may only increase its size by fresh deposits of sand, and *churs* or islands of this nature, which have held their ground for a few seasons, soon become covered with a dense growth of reeds.

The principal rivers which fall into the Brahmaputra in Lakhimpur are, from the north bank, the Digaru, Diphu, and Kundil, which fall into it east of Sadiya, the Dibang, the Sesseri, the Dihang, the Subansiri, the Ranganadi, and the Dikrang. On the south bank it receives the Noa Dihing, the Dibru and the Buri Dihing. The Digaru, Diphu, and Kundil are of little

The tribu-
taries of the
Brahmaputra.

importance in the economy of the district. The Kundil flows past Sadiya, but the greater part of its course lies outside the Inner Line, and the same can be said of the whole of the Digaru, and almost all the Diphu. The Dibang, with its tributary the Dikrang, the Sessleri, and the Dihang can be described in general terms. They debouch upon the plain through gorges of great natural beauty, the current is swift, the bed of the river full of snags and boulders, and the scenery through which they make their way extremely picturesque. There is, however, hardly any portion of these rivers which lies within the Inner Line, and the want of population in their neighbourhood in the plains, and the savage character of the tribesmen in the hills, render them of no account as routes for traffic.

**The
Subansiri.**

The Subansiri is believed to rise far up amongst the mountains of Thibet, and enters the plains of North Lakhimpur through a gorge of singular beauty. On either side, the hills rise from the river, their sides being for the most part clad in dense tropical forest, the trees thrusting their roots into every crevice in the rocks, though here and there sheer cliffs rise straight from the still dark water. Creepers bind the trees together with a soft green veil, and slender palms, giant tree ferns, and broad-leaved plantains are to be seen on every side. The rocks near the water's edge are covered with moss and ferns, and nature seems to have been determined to produce a masterpiece of river, hill, and forest scenery. In places the river comes roaring down in rapids, which can only be shot by the most expert of boat-men ;

in places it stretches out in reaches of still green water whose smooth unruffled surface is fifty or sixty feet above the bottom. It enters the plains near Dolongmukh and flows a southerly and westerly course till it joins the Luhit near Garamur, and finally falls into the Brahmaputra opposite Dhansirimukh. Like other rivers that flow from the Himalayas, the banks are alternately sheer and sloping as the current sets from side to side; and on one hand there will be a steep wall of sandy soil some eight or ten feet high, while on the other there is a gently sloping beach stretching some hundreds of yards towards the higher levels. Before falling into the Brahmaputra, the Subansiri collects nearly all the drainage of the North Lakhimpur sub-division, the principal tributaries on the left bank being the Sampara, and the Koran. The Koran has two considerable tributaries, the Dhol, and the Charikaria or Sisi, which flows past Dhakuakhana, and though it joins the Koran is also connected by another channel with the Kherkutia Suti. On the right bank there is the Ghagar with its various tributaries, the Kadam, and several minor streams.

The Rangapani rises in the Daffa Hills and enters the plains near the Joyhing tea estate. From there it flows a southerly course till it falls into the Luhit to the west of Garamur, after receiving a large number of minor streams, all of them flowing in a southerly and easterly direction from the hills. The Dikrang is also a considerable river which flows from the hills into the Luhit.

The
Rangapani
and
Dikrang.

**The Buri
Dihing.**

South of the Brahmaputra the most important river is the Buri Dihing, which rises in the Patkai range, and flows a tortuous course with a generally westerly direction till it falls into the Brahmaputra, after a course of about 150 miles. Its principal tributaries are—on the right bank the Digboi, the Tipling, the Tingrai, and the Sesa; and on the left bank the Tirap and the Namsang. After leaving the hills, it flows along the southern border of the district past the important settlement at Margherita. It then winds its way through an outlying spur of the Assam range, passes Jaipur, the site of an old cantonment, Nahorkhutiya, where it is crossed by the Assam-Bengal Railway, and Khowang; and during the last part of its course forms the boundary between the Lakhimpur and Sibsagar districts. Below Jaipur the floods of the river do some damage, and steps are now being taken to repair an embankment which was constructed in the time of the Ahom Rajas. The spill water is, however, said to have a fertilizing effect, where the flood is not deep enough to injure the crop. Even as far from its mouth as Margherita, the Dihing is about 200 yards in width. The bed is sandy and in places obstructed with snags, and it is not very largely used for purposes of navigation.

**The Noa
Dihing and
Dibru.**

The Noa Dihing rises in the Singpho Hills and pursues a westerly and then a northerly course till it falls into the Brahmaputra east of Sadiya. Through the greater part of its course it flows through jungle land, and, as in the higher reaches the current is very strong, it is of little importance in the interior economy of the district. It is connected with the Buri Dihing, and its principal

tributaries are, on the left bank the Dirak, and on the right the Tengapani. The country between the Dibru-Sadiya Railway and the Brahmaputra is drained by the Dibru, but though it has given its name to the capital of the district, it is not a stream of very much importance. It rises in the Buri Dihing mauza, and receives in the course of its journey towards the Brahmaputra, a large number of petty *jans* and streams, the most important of which are the Dum Duma and the Dangori.

South of the river the level of the country is fairly high, and in the settled tracts there are not many *bhils* or marshes of importance. North of the Brahmaputra there is a heavy local rainfall to be carried off, and the rivers are liable to be swollen by the drainage of the hills through which they make their way into the district. Much of the country also lies comparatively low, and the water tends to collect in the lower levels and basins. Some of these *bhils* are extremely picturesque. In the centre lies the actual sheet of water, surrounded as a rule by a stretch of the richest pasture in which the cattle can graze knee-deep in the cold weather, while the whole is enclosed by a wall of elephant grass and reeds. The surface of the lake is dotted over with islets and clumps of flowering grasses, and in the cold weather is visited by flocks of duck and other aquatic birds. To the north the view is bounded by the hills, while in the near distance there is the dark green line of forest or bamboo groves. The most important *bhils* south of the Brahmaputra are the Garukhuti *bhil* in Jamira mauza, the Chaparu and

Lakes and
Marshes.

Kawamari *bhils* in Larua, and the Romai *bhil* in Madarkhat. North of the river there is the great Kani *bhil* in the Sisi mauza, the Pabhamari and Bangalmari *bhils* in Dhemaaji, the Bhimpara *bhil* in Kadam, and various other smaller sheets of water.

Geology.. The district consists of a wide alluvial plain composed of a mixture of sand and clay in varying proportions, and surrounded on three sides by hills belonging to the tertiary period. The mountains on the north lie beyond the frontier and have never been properly explored, but are believed to be composed of great thicknesses of soft massive sandstones, of tertiary age and fresh water origin. Practically nothing is known of the Mishmi Hills at the eastern end of the valley, beyond the fact that they contain limestone. The hills to the south consist of sandstones and shales, probably of Nummulitic age, interspersed with valuable coal measures and ironstones.* The geological deposits of economic value are gold, coal, petroleum oil, limestone, kaolin, and salt. The extent to which they have hitherto been worked and the possibilities of their further exploitation are discussed in a later chapter.

Climate. There is no district in the Assam Valley, and probably few in the plains of India, in which the climate is more endurable than it is in Lakhimpur. In October the rains stop, and the temperature begins to fall, the average maximum for that month being

* Further information with regard to the Geology of Upper Assam will be found in a paper by J. Malcolm Mac'aren, Esq., B Sc., F. G. S., Published in the Records of the Geological Survey of India, volume xxxi, part 4, 1904.

only 84·6 degrees Fahrenheit. During the four succeeding months the climate is delightful ; the total rainfall during this period at Dibrugarh only just exceeds six inches, the sky is clear, the sun though bright has little power, and the air is cool and pleasant. Fogs sometimes hang over the country in the neighbourhood of the Brahmaputra, but, by diminishing the period during which the earth is exposed to the influence of the sun's rays, they help to keep the country cool, and so are not an unmitigated evil. In January, the average maximum is less than 71 degrees, the average minimum less than 49, and December and February are very little warmer. In March and April, copious showers prevent the temperature from rising, and in the former month the average minimum is only 60° and in the latter less than 65°, while the average maximum is under 80°, though in April at Dhubri it is nearly 89°. From June to September is the only really unpleasant portion of the year. During these four months, nearly 72 inches of rain fall at the head-quarter's station, the air becomes saturated with moisture, and though, in comparison with other parts of India, the thermometer keeps fairly low, the damp heat is trying alike to Europeans and to natives. There are, however, few districts in the plains of India in which there is so small a portion of the year to which exception can be taken on climatic grounds ; and the difference between the eastern ends of the Brahmaputra and the Surma Valley, can be judged from the fact that the average annual maximum at Dibrugarh is

5.5 degrees less than it is at Silchar. Further details with regard to the temperature in Dibrugarh will be found in Table I.

Rainfall. As in other parts of the Assam Valley, the rainfall is much heavier near the Himalayas than it is in the centre of the district. At Pathalipam it is 168 inches in the year, and at the subdivisonal station of North Lakhimpur it is 128 inches. At Dibrugarh it drops to 114 inches, and anywhere between Sadiya and Margherita it is only about 100 inches. Further details with regard to the average rainfall will be found in Table II.

Storms and Earthquakes. Lakhimpur is seldom visited by violent and destructive storms, though an interval of dry weather in the rainy season is often closed by a thunder shower, which at once relieves the oppressiveness of the atmosphere. Hailstorms sometimes do damage, especially to tea gardens, but are very local in their sphere of action. The rivers occasionally overflow their banks, but the area liable to inundation is generally well known, and is accordingly avoided by the cultivator, and the crops do not often suffer serious injury. Shocks of earthquake are felt from time to time, but there is no record of serious damage ever being done, and even the great earthquake of 1897 left this district practically unscathed.

Fauna. Wild animals are numerous, and include elephants, rhinoceros, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig, and different kinds of deer of which the principal varieties are the sambar (*cervus unicolor*),

the barasingha or swamp deer (*cervus duvaucelii*), the hog deer (*cervus porcinus*), and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). Elephants are fairly common, especially near the hills, and when the crops are ripening do much damage unless the numbers of the herds are regularly kept down. For this purpose the district is divided into seventeen mahals or tracts. The right to hunt in each mahal is sold by auction, and the lessee is required to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on every animal captured. The method usually employed is that known as *mela shikar*. Mahouts, mounted on staunch and well-trained elephants, pursue the herd which generally takes to flight. The chase is of a most arduous and exciting character. The great animals go crashing through the thickest jungle and over rough and treacherous ground at a surprising pace, and the hunter is liable to be torn by the beautiful but thorny cane brake, or, were he not very agile, to be swept from his seat by the boughs of an over hanging tree. After a time, the younger animals begin to flag and lag behind, and it is then that the opportunity of the pursuer comes. Two hunters single out a likely beast, drive their elephants one on either side, and deftly throw a noose over its neck. The two ends of the noose are firmly fastened to the *kunkis*, as the hunting elephants are called, and as they close in on either side, the captured animal is unable to escape, or to do much injury to his captors, who are generally considerably larger than their victim. The wild elephant is then brought back to camp where it is tied up for a time and gradually tamed.

Small kheddahs too are occasionally erected, and the animals gradually driven into them, but this system of elephant hunting is too well known to require description. Fifty-seven animals were caught in 1902-03, the last year in which the mahals were sold by the Deputy Commissioner. Rhinoceros are now becoming scarce, but are occasionally met with in the swampy ground in the wilder portions of the district. They breed slowly, and, as the horn is worth more than its weight in silver, and the flesh is prized as food, they present a tempting mark to the native hunter. The two-horned variety of rhinoceros is said to be found in the desolate hills which lie between Assam and the Khamti Valley, but has not been shot by any European.

Herds of wild buffaloes are found north of the Brahmaputra, and wild bulls often serve the tame cows that are kept by the Nepalese. Bison are generally found near the hills and in the neighbourhood of tree forest; tigers, leopards, and bears are met with in the wilder parts of the district. A curious animal called the takin (*budorcas taxicolor*) is found in the Mishmi hills, but, though its horns are not unfrequently brought down to Sadiya, no European has as yet succeeded in shooting it. According to Blandford, it is a heavily made animal much larger than a serow, with a big head, thick horns, and stout limbs. The length from snout to vent is six and a half feet, and the height at shoulder three and a half feet. It appears to be allied to both goats and antelopes. Wild animals cause little loss of human life, but in 1903, are said to have accounted for nearly two

thousand heads of cattle. The number of human beings killed in that year, by different animals was as follows :— elephants 3, tigers 3, bear 1, wild buffalo 1, total 8. Rewards were at the same time paid for the destruction of 34 tigers, 13 leopards, and 15 bears. Small game include wild geese and duck, snipe, florican (*sypheotis bengalensis*), black and marsh partridge, pheasants, and hares.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY—NATIVE RULE.

Early traces of Hinduism in Lakhimpur—The Chutiyas—Their Conquest by the Ahoms—Rise of the Ahoms—Koch and Muhamadan Invasions—Rudra Singh in 1700 A.D., rules the whole of Assam Proper—The Moamaria Insurrection—The Burmese Invasion—Occupation by British in 1825—Manners and Customs of Ahoms—The Paik System—The fighting qualities of the Ahoms—Arbitrary Government and Savage Punishments—Social Life—Attitude towards Hinduism—The position of Women—Condition of Country in 1824.

Early legends.

The earliest legends suggest that Hindu princes were reigning in Lakhimpur some centuries before the Christian era. Local tradition assigns to Bhismaka the construction of a fort whose ruins are to be seen between the gorges of the Dikrang and Dibang rivers. The walls of this fort were made of hewn granite, surmounted by a breast-work of loop-holed brick, and were evidently constructed by persons possessed of considerable engineering skill; but there is nothing to connect them with Bhismaka or the heroic age of the Mahabharata. The white scar of a landslip on the hills is said to be the remains of a wedding feast, which Bhismaka was giving to celebrate the union of his daughter Rukmini with Sisupal, when the bride was carried off by Krishna; but little or no

reliance can be placed upon these legends, and, according to the ordinary Pauranic accounts, Bhismaka's kingdom was situated in Berar. At the same time it must be admitted that there are good reasons for supposing that centuries ago Lakhimpur formed part of the territory of a civilized prince, who was overthrown by the Chutiyas, a tribe who are still found in large numbers at the eastern end of the Assam Valley.

Of the early history of the Chutiyas not much is known, but they are believed to be members of the great Bodo race, and to have entered the plains from the north-east. Colonel Dalton, quoting from an ancient chronicle, which is confirmed by local tradition, states that the Chutiyas were originally settled in the hills near the Subansiri river. The tribe lived in large independent villages, like the Abors and Miris of the present day. In course of time, one Bibar seems to have attained a certain measure of supremacy over the neighbouring villages, and the process begun by the father was carried on still further by the son. He extended his influence over the wild tribes, assumed the title of Lord of the Hills, and, at the head of his followers, descended into the valley of the Brahmaputra. He there defeated a king called Bhadra Sen, and founded a capital called Ratnapur, which is said to have been situated in the Majuli or in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. Gaur was at that time still under the rule of a Hindu dynasty, so the irruption of the Chutiyas must have taken place prior to its conquest by the Muhammadans in 1204 A.D. The Chutiya leader assumed the name of Ratnadwaj

The
Chutiyas

Pal, contracted an alliance with a neighbouring Raja called Naipal, and generally consolidated his power. He excavated tanks, built temples, and constructed a line of forts along the frontier. He then asked the king of Kamateswar* to bestow a daughter in marriage upon his son, and on that prince rejecting the proposed alliance with scorn, constructed a road to his territories protected by forts erected at intervals along the line of march, and so alarmed the Kamateswar Raja that his daughter was handed over without delay. Ratnadwaj visited the king of Gaur, and left a son to be educated at his Court. The boy died and his body was despatched to his father, who received it when he was building a new city, called in memory of this event Sadiya (the place where the corpse was given).

Ratnadwaj was succeeded by five kings, each of whom bore the name of Pal. The last of the series, Karmadwaj, had one daughter for whose hand there were so many suitors, that the king, with a Jephthah like fatuity, decided to submit the selection of his son-in-law to the arbitrament of fate. A flying squirrel was seen hovering over Sadiya, and the hand of the princess was promised to the man who could bring it down with an arrow. A poor young Chutiya was successful, and much to her disgust the proud princess was united to her lowly spouse. The old king then resigned in favour

* Presumably Kamatapur in Kuch Behar, which is said to have been founded by Niladwaj, whose grandson Nilambar was conquered by the Muhammadans at the end of the 15th century. This date would be too late for the invasion of the Chutiyas and the expedition against Kamatapur is probably quite mythical.

of his son-in-law, who assumed the name of Nitipal.* Naturally enough he was utterly unfitted for the high position to which he had so suddenly and undeservedly been raised, and the kingdom was soon reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion. The Ahoms seized this opportunity to push home their attacks, and the power of the Chutiyas was broken once for all. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these legends. The story of the poor Chutiya boy who marries the princess is probably a poetical description of the descent of the tribe into the valley, and of the subjugation of the Hindu dynasty reigning in Lakhimpur. The date of the downfall of the Chutiya kingdom, according to the Chutiya Buranji, is moreover, 150 years later than that assigned to this event in the Ahom chronicles, which state that it took place in 1523 A.D.†

The Ahom historians say that when they entered Assam in 1228 A.D., the Chutiyas were established at Sadiya, and were masters of the country as far west as the Disang river. Hostilities broke out between the two powers towards the middle of the fourteenth century. In 1376 A.D. the Chutiyas declared that they were ready to make peace, invited the Ahom king to a regatta on the Safrai river, and put him to death, as soon as they had got him into their power. The two

The Ahom
account of
the Chutiyas

* According to another version the king left an infant son, for whom Nitipal acted as regent.

† Mr. H. J. Kellner in a manuscript note in the Nowgong office says, that it must have occurred before 1503 A.D. The General who conquered the Chutiyas was Phuchunmung Bor-gohain who was killed in a great battle between the Ahoms and Kacharis at Kaliabar in 1503.

tribes continued to live in a state of intermittent conflict, but at the beginning of the sixteenth century the struggle began to assume an acute form. The Chutiyas at first met with a considerable measure of success. They pitched their camp at Dikhomukh, raided the territory of the Ahoms, and were, at any rate, not worsted in the engagements that ensued. Another account represents the Chutiyas as extremely stupid. They mistook scarecrows sent down the river on rafts for the enemy, and, when preparing a night attack by water, they were so drunk that they forgot to unmoor their boats. On waking the next morning they were so puzzled to find themselves still in the same place, that they at once retreated without attempting to engage the enemy.

In 1523 the Chutiya king began to treat for peace, but declined to accept the Ahom terms, which involved the surrender of ancestral heirlooms in the shape of a gold umbrella and bracelets. The attack was accordingly resumed, and the Chutiya king retreated with his army to the hill Chantan or Chandangiri. The Ahoms in their pursuit experienced the difficulties which at the present day confront our own troops in their transfrontier expeditions. The soldiers at first retreated but they were rallied by their officers; and, in the engagements that ensued, the Chutiya king and his son were killed. Their heads were conveyed to the Ahom prince Suhunmong, more generally known as the Dihingia Raja, and placed by him at the foot of the stairs leading to the house of their principal God at Cherideo. The administration of Sadiya

was then entrusted to an Ahom noble, and the leading Chutiya families deported to places lower down the valley. But the tribe again rebelled, it was only with difficulty that this fresh revolt was stamped out, and as late as 1572 A.D., an expedition was sent against an insubordinate Chutiya chief.

From 1523, A.D., till the final expulsion of the Burmese by the British in 1825, Lakhimpur, in name at any rate, formed part of the territory of the Ahom kings, and some account must now be given of the origin of this people and of their gradual expansion into an important power.* The Ahoms were a Shan tribe from the kingdom of Pong in the upper valley of the Irawadi, who, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, crossed the Patkai, and settled in the south of the territory which has since been formed into the districts of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. The country at the foot of the hills was occupied by tribes of Morans and Borahis whom they easily subdued, and who were absorbed by inter-marriage with their conquerors. To the west and north, however, they were confronted by far more powerful nations. Upper Assam was ruled by the Chutiyas, and on the west, there was the strong Kachari kingdom, with its capital at Dimapur, which included the western part of what is now the Sibsagar district, and a considerable portion of Nowgong. The conquest of the Chutiyas by the Dihingia Raja has already been

* The description of the manners and customs of the Ahoms has been taken from old Ahom Burangis or Chronicles, translations of which will be found in the office of the Superintendent of Ethnography.

described, but he did not rest content with his successes in the east, and in 1536 he sacked Dimapur, killed the Kachari king, and compelled his successor to remove his capital to Maibang, on the northern slopes of the North Cachar Hills.

**Koch and
Muhamma-
dan inva-
sions.**

The Ahoms were now supreme in Upper Assam, and it is evident that the eastern portion of Darrang was included in their territory, as in 1523 a large number of Chutiya families were deported to a place a little to the east of the Bhareli river, which bears the name Sootea or Chutiya to the present day. They were still, however, exposed to danger from the Koch and Muhammadan powers in the west. In 1532 they defeated, with great slaughter, a Muhammadan invader named Turbuk on the banks of the Bhareli river ; but a few years later they were conquered by the Koch king, Nar Narayan, who occupied their capital Gargaon, the modern Nazira, and exacted tribute from the Ahom prince.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century they were again involved in war with the Muhammadans, as their king Pratap Singh declined to surrender Bali Narayan, the Koch prince. This monarch had fled to the Ahoms for protection, and sagaciously pointed out that in their own interests it was most desirable to maintain a buffer state between themselves and the great power that confronted them on the west. Most of the fighting took place in Lower Assam ; but in 1615 A.D., a Musalman army under Satrajit advanced as far as the Bhareli, to avenge a Muhammadan trader, who had been put to death by the Ahom king. The Muhammadans, though at first

successful, were subsequently defeated both on land and water with great slaughter. The Ahoms are said to have crossed the Bhareli by a bridge, and to have turned the flank of their opponents. The bulk of the invaders were killed, and the few prisoners who were taken were subsequently put to death by the Ahom generals, much to the indignation of their ruler, who degraded his officers for this cold blooded murder.

The war then dragged on in Lower Assam, but, in 1637 A. D. on the death of Bali Narayan, the Bar Nadi, which at present forms the western boundary of Darrang, was fixed as the frontier between Muhammadan and Ahom territory. In 1658, the Ahoms took advantage of the confusion that ensued, when Shah Jahan fell sick, to extend their arms to the Sankosh; but three years later they were driven back by Mir Jumla the Nawab of Dacca, who occupied Gargaon, and there concluded a treaty with the Ahom Raja Chutumla, otherwise known as Jaiadwaj Singh. The stars in their courses fought, however, on the Ahom side. The rains set in with a severity exceptional even in that rainy land, the country was converted into a swamp, and disease made havoc of the Muhammadans crowded together in their waterlogged camp. A large number of men were lost in the retreat down the valley, and by 1667, the Ahoms had again established themselves at Gauhati. A few years later, this town was retaken by the Muhammadans, but it was captured again by the Ahoms during the reign of Gadadhar Singh (1681-1695), and, from that time onward, Goalpara

remained the frontier outpost of the Muhammadan dominions.

Rudra Singh
1696-1714
A. D.

The zenith of the Ahom power was reached in the reign of Rudra Singh, who founded a new capital at Rangpur, and waged successful war against the Rajas of Cachar and Jaintia. Two large forces marched the one through the North Cachar Hills, the other through the Jaintia Hills to Jaintiapur, and the general in command succeeded in arresting the Jaintia Raja, and deporting him to the Assam Valley. The Ahoms were, however, unable to impose their yoke upon the free and savage highlanders, who rose as one man and butchered the garrisons which had been left in a chain of forts across the Jaintia Hills. Rudra Singh was the first of the Ahom kings to publicly become the disciple of a Hindu priest, and, after his death, the power of the Ahom kingdom began steadily to decline.

Sib Singh.
1714-1744,
A. D.

His son Sib Singh was a weak prince, much under the influence of his wives, whose name has come down to posterity as excavator of the great tank near which the present station of Sibsagar (Sib's tank) stands. Both he and his two successors were ardent Saktists, and erected numerous temples, and made liberal grants of land and *paiks*, for the maintenance of their special form of Hinduism.

Pramatta Singh,
1744-1761.

Rajeswar Singh,
1761-1769.

The reign of his successor Pramatta Singh was uneventful, and, during the incumbency of the next prince Rajeswar Singh, the signs of the decay of the Ahom power became all too clear. The Raja of

Manipur was driven from his home and applied to the Ahom king for aid. Orders were issued for the despatch of an expedition, but the nobles, to whom the command was entrusted, excused themselves on various grounds and declined the proffered honour. The army lost its way when endeavouring to cross the Patkai, a large number of men perished, and, though ultimately the Manipur Raja succeeded in regaining his dominions, it does not appear that the assistance of the Ahoms materially contributed towards his success.

Lakshmi Singh's reign was signalized by the outbreak of the Moamaria insurrection. The causes of this insurrection are not quite clear. According to the chroniclers, a certain Hathidharia Chungi with one Nahor Kachari came to offer their annual tribute of elephants to the king. The elephant which they tendered to the Borbarua was a lean and sorry animal, and, as an expression of his disapproval, he cut off their hair and noses, flogged them, and drove them away. Boiling with indignation at this outrage, Nahor proceeded to the house of a Hari woman, whose daughter he espoused, and from whom he received a set of metal plates, covered with mystical incantations to confound the enemy. He then applied to the Moamaria gosain for help, which was readily afforded him, and the standard of revolt was raised. This is the account given by the Ahom Chroniclers, and it differs to some extent from the story as told by the Moamaria gosain at the present day. According to this authority, the leaders of the rebellion were two Moamarias named

Lakshmi
Singh.
1769-1780.
The Moa-
maria Insur-
rection.

Nahor Khora and Ragho Neogay, who, after they had been punished for failing to deliver the elephants required, went for assistance to their gosain. The gosain himself declined to listen to their proposals, but they succeeded in winning over his son Gagini Bardekha, who gave them a weapon consecrated with the magic plates of the Kalpataru. The Kalpataru was a sacred book which Anirudha is said to have obtained from Sankar Deb, though the Ahom chroniclers contemptuously assert that it was the property of a sweeper woman.

Success and
subsequent
defeat of
Moamaras.

From the very first the rebels carried all before them. The royal armies were defeated under circumstances which suggest that men and officers alike were guilty of gross incompetence and cowardice; and Lakshmi Singh was driven from his capital and captured. The insurgents then proceeded to appoint Ramakanta, the son of Nahor Khora, to be their Raja. Marauding parties harried the country on every side, and the misery of the common people was extreme. A report at last gained ground that orders had been issued for the execution of all the former officers of state, and this incited the adherents of the king to make one final effort. The signal for the attack is said to have been given by one of the wives of Lakshmi Singh. Ragho, who was one of the most influential men amongst the Moamaras, had forcibly taken her to wife, and, as he was bending down at the *bihu*, to offer his largess to a dancing boy, she cut him down with a sword. On the death of their leader, the rebel forces were surprised and scattered, and a pitiless vengeance taken that spared neither age

nor sex.* The house of the moamaria Mahunt was surrounded, and almost the whole of his family was killed before his eyes, while all the officers appointed by the Moamaras were seized and beaten to death. The wives of the rebel prince were treated with savage cruelty. One of them was flogged to death, while two others had their ears and noses cut off and their eyes put out.

In 1780, Lakshmi Singh died, and was succeeded by his son Gaurinath, in whose reign the Moamaria insurrection broke out anew, and with increased violence. At first, the king's troops met with some measure of success, and orders were issued outlawing the rebels and authorising any person to kill any Moamaria he might meet, regardless of time, place, sex, or age. Such orders seem to have been only too well adapted to the temper of the people, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "the villagers thereupon massacred the Moamaras with their wives and children without mercy." The rebels in their turn were not slow to make reprisals; they plundered the country on every side, and "the burning villages appeared like a wall of fire." The ordinary operations of agriculture were suspended, no harvests could be raised, and famine killed those whom the sword had spared. "The price of a katha of rice rose to one gold mohur, and men starved in crowds under the trees forsaking their wives and children." The highest Hindu castes are said to have eaten the flesh of cows, and dogs and jackals were devoured by the common people.

**Gaurinath
Singh.
1780-1794.**

**Moamaras
again
victorious.**

* The Moamaras say that 790,000 members of their sect were killed, which is no doubt an oriental exaggeration.

In 1786, the rebels under Bharat Singh inflicted a decisive defeat upon the royal troops, and took Rangpur, the capital, by storm. The king fled to Gauhati, and in his terror even left his wives behind him. His generals remained behind in Upper Assam and carried on the contest with varying success. Troops were despatched to their assistance from Manipur, but most of them were ambushed and cut up, and the survivors had no heart to carry on the struggle. The desolation of the country is thus described by the Ahom chronicler. "The Matakhs harried the temples and the idols of the gods, and put to death all the sons and daughters of our people. For a great length of time our countrymen had no home, some took shelter in Bengal, some in Burma, some in the Daffa Hills, and others in the fort of the Bura Gohain, who was fighting with the Matakhs for years and months together." Bharat Singh ruled at Rangpur for upwards of six years and coins are extant which bear his name; but in 1792 a small British force was sent to the assistance of the Ahom king under the command of Captain Welsh. Gauhati, which had been captured by a mob of Doms under a Bairagi, was re-taken, Krishna Narayan, the rebellious Raja of Mangaldai was subdued, and in March 1794 Rangpur was re-occupied after a decisive victory over the insurgents. Captain Welsh was then recalled, but the Ahom king was able to keep his enemies in check by the help of sepoys trained on the English system.

**Kamaleswar
Singh,
1794-1809,
A. D.**

A few months after the departure of Captain Welsh, Gaurinath died and was succeeded by his son Kamaleswar Singh. The country was still in a state of great

disorder. The Daflas, not content with harrying the villages on the north bank, crossed the Brahmaputra and attacked the royal troops near Silghat, but were repulsed with considerable loss. Even Europeans were not safe, and a Mr. Raush, a merchant of Goalpara, who had extended his business operations to Darrang, was robbed and murdered by "naked Bengalis." These freebooters then occupied North Gauhati, but when they attempted to make good their position on the south bank, they were defeated with heavy loss by the royal troops near Pandu-ghat. The Daflas again harried the Darrang district, and even enlisted Bengali sepoy in their service, but were ultimately conquered and dispersed. Victories were also obtained over the Moamarias and the Khamtis at the eastern end of the valley.

In 1809, Kamaleswar Singh was succeeded by his brother Chandra Kanta Singh. The Bor Phukan or viceroy of Gauhati incurred the suspicion of the Bura Gohain or prime minister and fled to Calcutta and thence to Burma. At the beginning of 1816, a Burmese army crossed the Patkai and re-instated the Bor Phukan; but shortly after their withdrawal Chandra Kanta was deposed, and Purandar Singh appointed in his stead. The banished monarch appealed to the Burmese, who, in 1818, returned with a large force and replaced him on the throne.

Final col-
lapse of the
Ahom King-
dom.

* This Mr. Raush, was the first European to interfere in the affairs of Assam. He sent 700 burkundazes to Gaurinath's assistance, but they were cut up to a man. A mass of masonry the size of a small cottage covers the remains of Mr. Raush's infant children at Goalpara.

They soon, however, made it clear that they intended to retain their hold upon Assam, and in 1820 Chandra Kanta fled to Goalpara, and from British territory began a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost kingdom. The Burmese were guilty of gross atrocities during their occupation of the country, the villages were plundered and burnt, and the people were compelled to seek shelter in the jungle. Women who fell into their hands were violated with every circumstance of brutality, and the misery of the unfortunate Assamese was extreme. Fortunately for them, causes of quarrel had by this time arisen between the British and the Burmese. In 1824, war was declared by the British Government, and a force was sent up the valley of the Brahmaputra which occupied Rangpur in January 1825, and compelled the Burmese to retire to their own territories; while in the following year, by the treaty of Yandaboo, Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

Ahom Administration.
The palk
system.

The above is but a brief account of the rise and fall of the Ahoms, but their history is more intimately connected with the Sibsagar district. It now remains to consider what is known of their social institutions, and the conditions under which those subject to them passed their lives.

The most striking feature in the economy of the Ahom state, and one which, (to judge from their conduct since they came under our rule) must have been extremely repugnant to the people, was the system of enforced compulsory labour. The lower orders were divided up into groups of three or four called *ghols* each

individual being styled a *powa paik*. Over every twenty *ghots* was placed an officer called *bara*, over every five *barus* a *saikia*, and over every ten *saikias* a *hazarika*. In theory one *paik* from each *ghot* was always employed on duty with the state, and while so engaged, was supported by the other members. The Raja and his ministers had thus at their disposal a vast army of labourers to whom they paid no wages, and for whose maintenance they did not even have to make provision. It was this system which enabled the Ahom Rajas to construct the enormous tanks and great embankments, which remain to excite the envy of a generation, which has been compelled to import from other parts of India almost all the labour required for the development of the Province and its industries. Many of the works constructed were of undoubted utility, but many, on the other hand, were chiefly intended for the glorification of their designers. Few objects are more worthy of the attention of an enlightened government than the supply of wholesome drinking water to the people. But the huge reservoirs, constructed by the Ahom kings, were out of all proportion to the population which could by any possibility have made use of them, while the close proximity in which these enormous tanks are placed is ample evidence that practical utility was not the object of their construction. On the other hand, embankments which were thrown up along the sides of some of the rivers near the capital, protected land which has become unculturable since they have fallen into dis-repair. The duty of providing the various

articles required for the use of the king and the nobility was assigned to different groups, which were gradually beginning to assume the form of functional castes. The rapidity with which these groups abandoned their special occupations, as soon as the pressure of necessity was removed, is a clear indication of the reluctance with which they must have undertaken the duties entrusted to them.*

Was.

But though the common people seem to have been compelled to supply an unnecessary amount of labour in times of peace, it was when war was declared that their sufferings were most pronounced. Certain clans of *paiks* were called out, and called out, it would seem, in numbers that were in excess of the actual requirements of the case; an error which entails the most disastrous consequences when the campaign is carried on in a country where supplies are scarce and communications difficult.

According to the Ahom chronicler, nearly 40,000 troops were despatched during the reign of Rajeswar Singh to reinstate the Manipuri Raja on the *gaddi*. Their guides, however, failed them, they lost their way in the Naga Hills, and about two-thirds of the soldiers perished, the mortality being chiefly due to famine and

* The system of enforced labour was no doubt unpopular, but it had much to recommend it. It taxed the people in the one commodity of which they had enough and to spare, *i.e.* labour. It also developed them on the industrial side, and the material comfort of the Assamese would possibly have been greater at the present day if they had not all of them been allowed to devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

disease. The military dispositions even of Rudra Singh, one of their greatest princes, suggest a want of due deliberation in design, and a feebleness and lack of method in execution. In his expeditions against the Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, the Ahoms lost 3,243 persons, and the practical results obtained seem to have been insignificant. The Jaintia Raja is himself ready to accept the Ahom king as his suzerain, but cannot impose his will upon the independent hillmen, who owe him but a nominal allegiance, and who decline to surrender their freedom at the bidding of their king. The Kachari prince sends tribute, but only "a string of pearls, a dugdagi (locket) and a horse;" assuredly a very small return on the quantity of human life and treasure expended. It must at the same time be admitted that the loot obtained on this occasion was not inconsiderable. It included 3 large cannon, 2,373 large and small guns, 12,000 pieces of silver, 143 gold embroidered coats, 63 elephants and 11 Turkey horses, besides other things; and, more valuable perhaps than all, over 2,000 human beings. At the conclusion of this dangerous and troublesome expedition, each *paik* received a gratuity of four annas, *batta* which would hardly satisfy the sepoy of to-day. The descriptions of the campaigns against the Moamarias, given by the Ahom chroniclers, clearly show that the generals were often guilty of incompetence and cowardice, while the rank and file do not seem to have fully realized the dangers that beset a defeated army. Conditions such as these must of necessity have been disastrous to the private soldier.

Muhamma-
dans des-
cribe Ahoms
as brave
soldiers.

The Muhammadan historians of the invasion of Mir Jumla give, however, a more favourable account of the Ahom military dispositions.* Their resources seem to have been considerable, and, in the course of the expedition, the Muhammadans captured 675 guns, one of which threw a ball three "mans" in weight, besides a large number of matchlocks and other field pieces. No less than 1,000 ships were taken, many of which could accommodate three or four score sailors; and in the naval engagement which took place above Silghat in March 1662 A. D., the Assamese are said to have brought seven or eight hundred ships into action. The Ahoms are described as strongly built, quarrelsome, bloodthirsty and courageous, but at the same time merciless, mean, and treacherous. They were more than equal to the Muhammadans in a foot encounter, but were much afraid of cavalry. This *corps d'élite* did not, however, exceed some 20,000 men, and the ordinary villagers, who were pressed into the service, were ready to fling away their arms and take to flight at the slightest provocation.

Uncertainty
and arbitra-
ry character
of Govern-
ment.

Another factor, which cannot but have re-acted unfavourably upon the common people, was the uncertainty of tenure, under which both the ministers and king held office. A perusal of the Ahom chronicles leaves the reader with the impression that the ministers were continually being deprived of their portfolios, and not unfrequently of life itself. Hardly less precarious was

* An interesting account of this invasion will be found in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, Volume XLI, Part I, pages 49-100.

the position of the king, and in the short space of 33 years, between 1648 and 1681, no less than two monarchs were deposed, and seven came to a violent end. Good government, as we understand the term, must have been impossible under such conditions, and we may be sure that the people suffered from this constant change of rulers. Buchanan Hamilton, writing at the beginning of the 19th century, states that the administration of justice under Ahom rule was fairly liberal. Important trials were conducted in open court, the opinion of assessors was consulted, the evidence was recorded, and capital punishment was only inflicted under a written warrant from the king. It is true, no doubt, that few persons possessed the power of imposing the death sentence. But they were allowed to inflict punishments which the victim could hardly be expected to survive, and his position was not unlike that of the heretic delivered by the inquisition to the civil arm, with the request that, "blood may not be shed."

Abundant evidence is available in the Ahom chronicles to show the arbitrary way in which the royal authority was exercised. The following instances are quoted from the reign of Pratap Singh, 1611-1649, A. D. A Kataki, or envoy charged with diplomatic relations with foreign powers, asked the Muhammadan commander on his frontier to supply him with two jars. His conduct was reported to the king, who immediately ordered him to be put to death. Another Kataki reported that he had heard from a down-country man that a Muhammadan force was advancing up the valley. The

Instances
of this.

king enquired of the Katakis, responsible for watching the movements of the enemy, whether this information was correct. This man declared that he was unable to obtain any confirmation of the rumour, whereupon the first Katakis was executed for presuming to meddle in matters with which he had no concern; a proceeding which seems to have been hardly calculated to ensure the supply of timely and accurate information. Three merchants then endeavoured to establish friendly relations between the Nawab of Dacca and the Ahom king. The latter prince took umbrage at such unwarrantable interference in affairs of state, and ordered the merchants to be put to death. It subsequently appeared that the facts had not been correctly represented, and the Bor Phukan and two other men responsible were promptly killed. A few years later, the king transported a large number of persons from the north to the south bank of the Brahmaputra, warning them that any one who attempted to revisit his former home would suffer the penalty of death with all his family "even to the child in the womb." Five hundred men attempted to return, as they wished, the chronicler informs us, to rear a brood of silkworms. The king had them arrested, and 300 were put to death, the remainder escaping in the darkness of the night.

Savage punishments: an official blinded for not dismounting before his official superior.

The following incident that occurred in the reign of Lakshmi Singh (1769-1780) is typical of the uncertainties of the time. One Ramnath Bhorali Borua, an officer of state, had the presumption to appear mounted in the presence of his official superior the Borborua. ▲

complaint was promptly laid before the king, who directed that both Ramnath and his brother should be deprived of sight. The injured man was not, however, destitute of friends, and came with his complaint to the Kalita Phukan, who had his private reasons for desiring the downfall of the Borborua. The Phukan went to the king, poisoned his mind against his minister with the suggestion that a conspiracy was on foot, a suggestion which in those days must always have seemed plausible enough, and, in a short time, the heads of the haughty Borborua, his two uncles, and his brother, were rolling in the dust. It is needless to multiply instances of the savage violence of the times, but the different forms of punishment in vogue call for some remark. Where life was spared, the ears, nose, and hair were cut off, the eyes put out, or the knee pans torn from the legs, the last named penalty generally proving fatal. Persons sentenced to death were hung, impaled, hewn in pieces, crushed between two wooden cylinders like sugarcane in a mill, sawn asunder, burnt alive, fried in oil, or, if the element of indignity was desired, shorn of their hands and feet and placed in holes, which were then utilized as latrines.

In the seventeenth century, it was no uncommon thing to compel conspirators to eat their own flesh, and more than one case is quoted, in which the father was forced to eat the liver of his son, a meal that was usually his last in this world. Punishment too was not restricted to the actual offender, but his wretched wife was liable to be handed over to the embraces of a Hari. Methods

such as these could hardly fail to have a terrifying effect on much more hardened criminals than the Assamese.

Social life
amongst the
Ahoms.

The Ahoms, even after they became a powerful nation, seem to have adhered to a simple style of life, in which there was little of extravagance or luxury. They have left few masonry memorials of their rule; the Raja's palace is almost invariably referred to as "a planked house," and, according to Buchanan Hamilton, the king alone was allowed to erect an edifice of brick. Shoes might not be worn except by the special license of the king, bedsteads and curtains were only to be found in the houses of the rich, and all but the most important visitors to a noble's house sat on the bare ground. The account given of the Raja's palace at Gargaon by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion is pitched in a more exalted key. Twelve thousand workmen had been engaged on it's construction for a year, and the audience hall was 120 cubits long by 30 wide. "The ornaments and curiosities with which the whole woodwork of the house was filled defy all description: no where in the whole inhabited world would you find a house equal to it in strength, ornamentation and pictures." The absence of all reference to these wonders in the Ahom histories, suggests, however, that the Muhammadans were anxious to magnify the power and majesty of the prince they had subdued.

The native chroniclers are naturally most concerned with the wars and religious festivals, which bulked so largely in the eyes of the historians of the day, and with the rise and fall of successive families of ministers. It

is only incidentally that light is thrown on the social conditions of the people. The kings seem to have indulged in frequent tours about their territories, the itinerary usually followed being Rangpur, Sonarinagar, Tengabari, Dergaon, Jaliarang Bornagar, Bishnath, and Kaliabar. They were fond of fishing and shooting, and fully appreciated the excitement to be obtained from the hunting of wild elephants. On the occasion of coronations and royal weddings, a week was generally devoted to the festivities, which seem, however, to have consisted for the most part of prolonged feasts, accompanied by much unmelodious music. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, acrobats and jugglers were imported from Bengal, who amused their royal patrons with tricks which are still shown to the tourist on the P. & O. Kamaleswar Singh visited in state the two principal *sattras* of Auniati and Dakhinpat, and was entertained with all his retinue by the gosains. The chronicler quaintly tells us that the lunch at Dakhinpat gave greater satisfaction than the one at Auniati; but does not say whether this was due to the superior skill of the Dakhinpatia cook, or to the greater beauty of the *sattras* precincts.

The first Hindus to influence the Ahom kings were saktists, and Pratap Singh (1611-1649) persecuted the Vaishnavites, one of whose leaders had converted his son to Hinduism. The disciples of the gosains were seized, human ordure was placed on their foreheads, and they were degraded to the sweeper caste. To be found in the possession of religious books meant death, not only to the

Attitude of
Ahoms to-
wards Hin-
duism. Sa-
vage persecu-
tion of Vaish-
navism.

actual owner, but to every member of his family. Even Pratap Singh's spiritual pastors were not spared, and he denounced the new religion which, in spite of the adherence of the Raja, had not been able to save from death his own beloved son. He then assembled 700 Brahmans, ostensibly to perform a festival, and, as a punishment for their incompetency, degraded them to the status of *paiks*. These persecutions were continued by Gadadhar Singh, who in 1692, plundered the treasure houses of the Vaishnavite gosains, and cast the idols into the water. No respect was shewn even to the sacred head of the Auniati *sattr*a, and he was driven from his home to Tejikhat. He fared, however, better than the gosain of Dakbinpat, who had his eyes put out and his nose cut off, while many Hindu priests were put to death. A policy of extermination seems in fact to have been inaugurated, and, according to one chronicler, orders were issued for the destruction of every Hindu child regardless of sex and age. The king had large quantities of pork, beef, and fowls, cooked by men of the Dom caste, and compelled Kewats, Koches, Doms, and Haris to partake of their unholy food.

This policy of oppression was reversed during the reign of Rudra Singh, his son, who was publicly admitted as a disciple of the Auniati gosain; and, from this time forward, the influence of the priests seems to have increased.

The leading
gosains per-
secuted by
Moamaras.

During the Moamaras insurrection, the religious orders again fell upon evil times. The rebel king confined the persons of the four principal gosains, and extorted

Rs. 8,000 each from Auniati and Dakhinpat, and Rs. 4,000 each from Garamur and Kamalabari. Religion was degraded by the promulgation of an order that any person could be initiated on payment of a betel nut, and the common people availed themselves in crowds of this indulgence. Subsequently in the reign of Gaurinath Singh, the Moamaras attacked the Garamur *sattr*, burned it to the ground, slew a large number of the disciples, and nearly killed the gosain himself. His successor Kamaleswar Singh (1794-1809) found himself unable to pay the sepoy, whose services were indispensable for the maintenance of some sort of order in the kingdom. Following the example of other monarchs, he called upon the church to supply the funds for the support of the temporal power. Contributions were levied on all the mahunts, and the demands of the soldiers were satisfied.

But, though converted to Hinduism, the Ahoms found the restrictions of their new religion irksome; and their gosains, with the tact which they display towards their converts of the present day, allowed their new disciples a considerable degree of latitude. Rudra Singh, though he had been publicly admitted to the church by the Auniati gosain, feasted his followers on buffaloes and pigs on the occasion of his father's funeral; while not only buffaloes, but even cows found a place in the menu of his coronation banquet. At the time of the first Moamaria insurrection, the rebel chief made overtures to Lakshmi Singh, and offered him, apparently in good faith, a pig for supper. A present such as this, clearly

Laxity of
Ahom Hin-
duism.

shows that even towards the end of the 18th century, the Hinduism of the Ahom kings was one of the most liberal variants of that catholic creed. Before taking any decisive step, it was the practice to refer, not only to the Brahmans and Ganaks, but also to the old Ahom priests the Deodhais and Bailongs. These venerable men were required to consult the omens, by studying the way in which a dying fowl crossed its legs; a system of divination which is in vogue amongst many of the hill tribes of Assam to the present day. The restrictions of caste were evidently somewhat lax, as we hear that the Moamaria mahunt had an intrigue with a Hari woman; while at the beginning of the 19th century the viceroy of Gauhati took a fisher girl for his mistress, a breach of the convenances for which, it should be added, he was deposed.

**The position
of women.**

The influence of the Muhammadans in Assam Proper was so slight, that the low view they professed to take of the other sex had little or no effect upon the general population. The Ahoms, like their Burmese ancestors, held their women folk in honour, and even at the present day, the purdah, and all that it implies, is almost unknown in the country inhabited by the Assamese. The Ahom princesses seem to have taken a prominent part on ceremonial occasions, and not unfrequently exercised considerable influence on affairs of state. In the middle of the 17th century, two of the queens almost usurped the reins of government, and, according to the Ahom chronicler, "their words were law." When called to account by the successor of their husband, they

proudly stated that they had been of great service to the king, at a time when he was ignorant of the way in which he should behave, whether when "eating, drinking, sitting, sleeping, or at council." Sib Singh (1714-1744) is said to have abdicated in favour of his queens, hoping thereby to defeat a prophecy which declared that he would be deposed; and coins have been found bearing the names of four of these princesses. The mother of Lakshmi Singh dug a tank, and Gaurinath entrusted to his step mother the control of the Khangiamel, and consulted with his mother about affairs of state. It was not, however, only the princesses of royal blood who concerned themselves with public matters. At the time of the Moamaria insurrection, one Luki Rani was sent against the rebels; and the victory over Turbuk in 1532 is partly ascribed to the courageous action of the widow of the Borgohain, who had been killed in a previous engagement by the Muhammadans. Desperate at the loss of her husband, she put on armour and rode into the ranks of the enemy to avenge his death. No mercy was shewn her and she fell, pierced with spears; but her example emboldened the Ahoms, who at once advanced to the attack and defeated the Musalmans with great slaughter.

In estimating the effects of British rule, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the state of the Province at the time when it passed into our possession, and first it must be pointed out that the British did not conquer Assam in the sense in which that word is usually employed. The native system of government had completely broken

Condition of
Province at
time of ces-
sion to the
British.

down, the valley was in the hands of cruel and barbarous foreigners, and it was not as conquerors, but as protectors and avengers that the English came. They were certainly not inspired by any *lust* for land. For some time after the expulsion of the Burmese, the East India Company were doubtful whether they would retain their latest acquisition, and an attempt was made to administer the upper portion of the valley through a descendant of the Ahom kings.

The condition in which we found the country was lamentable in the extreme. For fully fifty years, the Province had been given over to desolation and anarchy. Life, property, honour were no longer safe, and the people in their misery had even abandoned the cultivation of the soil, on which they depended for their very livelihood. Bands of pirates used to raid up the valleys of the Dhansiri and Kakadanga, and return with their boats laden with booty, leaving ruin, death, and desolation in their wake. The hill tribes were no longer kept in order, and the Daflas descended and harried the submontane tracts, and even extended their depredations to the south of the Brahmaputra. The treatment, meted out to the unfortunate villagers, can be judged from the protest made by the hillmen to Rajeswar Singh, shortly before the collapse of the Ahom government, when they begged him "not to pull out the bones from the mouth of dogs." Buchanan Hamilton, writing in 1809 A. D., states that north of the Brahmaputra "there is no form of justice. Each power sends a force which takes as much as possible from the cultivator."

The memories of this miserable time survived long after it had passed away. In 1853, an Assamese gentleman Srijut Ananda Ram Dhekial Phukan, wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills. "Our countrymen hailed the day on which British supremacy was proclaimed in the Province of Assam, and entertained sanguine expectations of peace and happiness from the rule of Britain. For several years antecedent to the annexation, the province groaned under the oppression and lawless tyranny of the Burmese; whose barbarous and inhuman policy depopulated the country, and destroyed more than one half of the population, which had already been thinned by intestine commotions and repeated civil wars. We cannot but acknowledge, with feelings of gratitude, that the expectations which the Assamese had formed of the happy and beneficial results of the Government of England, have, in a great measure been fulfilled; and the people of Assam have now acquired a degree of confidence in the safety of their lives and property, which they never had the happiness of feeling for ages past."

Native testimony on this point.

Whatever errors have been committed by the British Government, and it is too much to hope that no mistakes of policy have been made during an administration of nearly eighty years, there can be no question that the introduction of a settled form of government has been of the greatest benefit to the immense mass of the people to whom it has been extended.

CHAPTER III.

HISTORY—BRITISH ADMINISTRATION.

Lakhimpur at first administered by native chiefs—The Khamtis at Sadiya—Matak—Purandar Singh's territory—The Singphos—The Mishmis—The Abors—The Miris—The Daflas—The Apatanangs—The Nagas—Lakhimpur Assamese in little more than name—Transfrontier explorations—Rima—Bor Khamti—The Patkai—Archaeology—Chronological table of native rulers.

Lakhimpur
not immediately
taken under direct
administration.

For the first few years after the expulsion of the Burmese, the administration of the remote and jungly tracts, which now constitute the prosperous district of Lakhimpur, was entrusted to the semi-independent chiefs whom we found in possession of the country. Sadiya and the villages in the neighbourhood was left till 1835 to the Khamti chief, who had seized this fief when the Ahom kingdom was tottering to its fall. Matak, or the country south of the Brahmaputra and west of the Buri Dihing, was ruled by the Matak chief or Bor Senapati till 1839; and between 1833 and 1838, the administration of the country north of the river, between Bishnath and Sadiya, was entrusted to Purandar Singh. Some reference must thus be made to these semi-independent principalities before referring to the history of the district under British rule.

Khamti
settlements.

The fertile plains of the Brahmaputra Valley have ever drawn towards them the tribesmen living in the

narrow glens and forest covered mountains with which they are surrounded; and, as the power of the Ahom kings began to wane, there was a forward movement of the hill men from the south and east. One of the most civilized of these tribes was the Khamtis, who occupy the rich valley east of the Daphabum which bears their name, and, in 1794, an offshoot from this horde advanced westwards into the valley of the Brahmaputra. They settled for a time on the Tengapani, but finding the Ahom Government in no condition to oppose their onward march, they crossed to Sadiya, expelled the local representative of the Raja, and took possession of the neighbouring country.

After the expulsion of the Burmese, the Khamti chief was recognised as the local Governor by Mr. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General on the north east frontier. He was allowed to collect poll tax from the villagers, and required, in lieu of tribute or of taxes, to maintain a contingent of 200 men who were armed by the British Government. In 1835, the old chief died, and his son and successor was wanting in a just appreciation of the strength of the suzerain power. A dispute arose between him and the Bor Senapati or ruler of Matak, with regard to some land near Saikhoa south of the Brahmaputra. The British officer attached the territory in dispute, pending his decision in the matter, but his orders were openly disregarded by the Khamti chief, who took forcible possession of the land he claimed. It was impossible to overlook such flagrant insubordination: he was deposed and deported lower

down the river, his post abolished, and Sadiya brought directly under the administration of the Company. A few years later, the ex-chief was rather rashly allowed to return and live amongst his people, and he at once proceeded to engage himself in intrigues against the British Government. In 1839 the plot bore fruit, and on the night of January 19th, a party of 500 Khamtis raided the station, murdered Col. White the political officer, and killed and wounded eighty of his men. But their courage failed them after delivering this attack, and they at once retreated into the Mishmi Hills. The Singphos, Mataks, and Abors all offered their assistance in quelling the revolt. Several expeditions were led into the hills; by December 1843, the last of the insurgents had submitted, and since that time they have never given any trouble.*

Matak

The rule of the Moamarias was entirely founded on the sword, but they undoubtedly succeeded in establishing their independence in a part of Lakhimpur. Coins are still extant which were minted by one of their Rajas Sarbananda; and, on the first arrival of the British, it was considered advisable to recognise the Matak Raja or Bor Senapati as a local chief. His jurisdiction was accordingly confirmed within the following boundaries: west and south the Buri Dihing, north the Brahmaputra, the Dibru river and its tributary the Dangori, and east an imaginary line drawn from a point south of Saikhoa to the Dehing. The territory was known as Matak, possibly because it was originally inhabited by members

*Vide History of the relations of the Government with the Hill tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal. By Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Mackenzie P. 57-60.

of the Matak tribe. According to Wilcox, the Matak were a distinct tribe whose language bore no affinity to that of their neighbours, who lived on the Hupong plain near the Dihing river, south of the Phungan pass. They said that they had been conquered by the Singphos, that one half of them had been carried into captivity, and that the rest fled to the protection of the Khamtis. In 1826, there were about 500 houses of Matak in Bor Khamti, but, at the time of Major Macgregor's visit in 1885, they had become merged in the general population.*

It was arranged that the Bor Senapati should furnish a contingent of 300 men, and, though he was to pay no revenue himself, he was to be responsible for the poll tax of any raiyats who might migrate from British territory into his dominions. He was permitted to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction over petty cases, but cases of murder, decoity, 'great wounding' and theft of sums, exceeding Rs. 50 were to be referred to the Political Agent for disposal. In practice this arrangement proved unsatisfactory. The rates of revenue charged were lower than those prevailing in the neighbouring territory, and there was a constant flow of settlers from the districts entrusted to Purandar Singh. In 1835, the liability to military service was commuted to an annual payment of Rs. 1,800, and in 1839, when the old Senapati died, the terms offered to his son were not sufficiently attractive to induce him to accept them. Matak was accordingly

* Account of Col. Woodthorp's expedition up the Dihing and into Bor Khamti in 1884-85 P. 8.

absorbed into the territories of the Company and administered like the other districts of Assam.

Purandar
Singh's ter-
ritory.

Reference has been already made to the hesitation with which the East India Company undertook the administration of Assam ; and, in 1833, the experiment was tried of placing the portion of the valley lying between the Dhansiri and the Dihing south of the Brahmaputra, and between Bishnath and Sadiya on the north bank, under Raja Purandar Singh. The Raja was accorded the position of a protected prince, was entrusted with full civil powers, and was required to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 to Government. It was thought that this arrangement would prove acceptable to the Assamese, but experience showed that, this was not the case. In 1838, Captain Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, travelled through the Raja's territories, and was met on every side by complaints and charges against his administration. North of the Brahmaputra, the country was left unprotected, and the people were harried by the Daffas, who carried off their women and children and held them to ransom. Small guards of sepoys were occasionally sent to protect the frontier, but as the villagers were expected to provide them with all that they required, their presence and absence alike were felt to be a grievance. The distasteful system of compulsory labour was still maintained ; duties of as much as one anna in the rupee were levied on everything except rice sold in the markets, and the people who remained were required to pay the poll tax of

others who had died or had migrated to the territory directly under our administration.

There can be little doubt that Purandar Singh's administration was unpopular with every section of the community, but the Raja was to some extent hampered by want of funds. Major White estimated that the revenue of his territories amounted to about Rs. 80,000.* Of this, no less than half a lakh was ear-marked as tribute, and the Raja was left with a nominal Rs. 30,000 per annum from which to defray the expenses of his court, to satisfy the demands of the priests, and to carry on the business of the administration. It is hardly matter for surprise that little was spent on public works, that the army was small and inefficient, and that it was impossible to remit taxation. The natural tendency of mankind to cavil at the Government seems to have been over-looked, and too much importance was attached to every murmur of complaint. The Muhammeden settlers in the country professed that they had serious grievances, yet Captain Jenkins was himself constrained to admit that those who came to see him were far better dressed than he expected, and that, judging by externals, many of them were well off. There can, however, be little doubt that the resumption of this territory, in 1838, was an act which met with hearty

* Letter No. 80 dated 6th July 1838 from Capt. Jenkins.

A letter from Purandar Singh's son states that, when his father accepted the Raj, he had no idea what a large proportion Rs 50,000 bore to the total revenues of the country. Col. Cooper he says had made a settlement for Rs 170,000, but neither he nor any of the British officers who succeeded him could collect more than Rs 70,000 or 80,000.

approval from the great majority of the persons affected, and on that account alone it was certainly not to be regretted

The frontier
tribes.
The
Singphos.

Apart from the economic development of the district, the history of Lakhimpur, since it came under British rule, is largely concerned with the misdemeanours of the frontier tribes. In the early days of British rule, the Singphos, like the Khamtis, were a source of trouble on the eastern frontier. In 1825, they made common cause with the Burmese, and Capt. Neufville advanced up the Noa Dihing, destroyed their villages, and released a large number of Assamese whom they had kept as slaves. They occupied a debatable land on the extreme frontier of the district, and, for some time, it was doubtful whether they should or should not be treated as British subjects. Their two principal leaders were the Bisa and the Duffa *gam*, and the rivalry between these chiefs had the effect of keeping the south eastern frontier in a perpetual condition of unrest. In 1830, a raid was made on Sadiya, but was repulsed without much difficulty. Five years later, the Duffa *gam* descended from the Patkai, raided Bisa's village and killed ninety persons, and troops had to be despatched to drive him back into the hills. In 1837, Captain Hannay and Dr. Griffiths proceeded across the Patkai to meet the Burmese representatives, in the hope of being able to arrange with them some definite system for the management of the Duffa *gam*; but the Burmese claims were so unreasonable that it was impossible even to take them into consideration. In 1843, the Singphos

broke out again, and an attack was made on our posts at Ningroo and Bisa. An expedition was sent against the marauders without delay; all resistance was definitely crushed, and since that date the tribe has given practically no trouble. A quasi political murder occurred, however, in 1898. The Buri Dihing mauzadar had reported that the village of Jauhing *gam*, the Bisa Raja, might be assessed to land revenue. The suggestion was accepted by the Deputy Commissioner, and a Doaniya, a class of people whom the Singphos look upon as slaves, was ordered to measure up his land. This Jauhing *gam* resented. A short time afterwards the mauzadar was shot, and suspicion rested on a man of Jauhing's village. Attempts were made to obtain the surrender of the culprit, but he was reported to have escaped, and he has up to date succeeded in evading justice. As a punishment for this outrage, the order for assessment, which up to that time had been allowed to remain in abeyance, was at once enforced, and revenue has since been collected without trouble.

The country north of the Khamtis and Singphos is inhabited by the Mishmis, who are divided into three tribes; the Digarus who occupy the hills north of the Brahmaputra and east of Sadiya, the Chulikatta who live on both sides of the Dibang, and the Bebejiya who occupy the valleys of the Ithan and the Ithu, to the north-east of the Chulikatta country. The story of our relations with this tribe, down to 1884-85, will be found in the History of the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Mackenzie,

**The
Mishmis.**

and is briefly summarized below. The first mention of the Mishmis in the records of the Bengal Secretariat dates from 1825, when Lieutenant Burlton reported that the "Mishmah" hills were inhabited by tribes "who were very averse to receive strangers." It seems, however, to have been possible to overcome these inhospitable tendencies, as in 1827, the Digaru Mishmis were visited by Lieutenant Wilcox, and in 1836 Dr. Griffiths entered the Mishmi Hills. Nine years later, Lieutenant Rowlatt penetrated to the Du, and up that river in a northerly direction to the village of Tupang, where he met the Thibetans.

**Murder of
M. Krick.**

at Rima

In 1851, M. Krick, a French missionary passed through the Mishmi Hills to the upper valley of the Luhit or Brahmaputra, and returned again without encountering any opposition. Three years later, he paid a second visit to the hills; but on this occasion he was not so fortunate and was murdered by a Mishmi chief named Kaiesha. It was not for long, however, that the murderer was allowed to go unpunished. Lieutenant Eden, at the head of sixty men, advanced eight marches into the hills, surprised and captured the offending village, and carried off Kaiesha to be solemnly hanged at Dibrugarh.

**Further out-
rages: then
peace for 20
years.**

In spite of this demonstration of our power to punish those who offended us even in the midst of their mountain fastnesses, the Chulikatta showed no inclination to respect our frontier. In 1855, they had the effrontery to carry off three servants belonging to Lieutenant Eden, and, towards the close of the year, they

attacked a village near Sadiya and killed two of its inhabitants. Two years later they cut up a village in close proximity to the sepoy lines at Sadiya, and steps were taken for the organization of a punitive expedition; but, in consequence of the outbreak of the Mutiny, it had to be abandoned. Further raids followed, and the experiment was then tried of supplying arms to the Khamti settlers on the frontier, with the idea that they would form a screen against the aggressions of the Mishmis. The experiment proved to be a complete success, and for twenty years the peace of the frontier was undisturbed as far as the Mishmis were concerned. In the cold weather of 1878-79, the Bebejiyas committed two small raids into the plains and murdered two Khamtis and two Assamese; and, though a party of frontier police was promptly sent out in pursuit, they had to return without seeing anything of the hill men.

In 1885, a British subject was murdered at Dikrang, his death, so rumour reported, being indirectly due to an attempt made to tame the savage hillmen by showing them the might and majesty of civilization, or so much of it as is represented in Calcutta. The headman of the Medakhel was taken to the Calcutta Exhibition, and on his return incontinently took to his bed and died. The British Government, sad to say, was held responsible for this unfortunate event. It was accordingly decided that a *sarkari* head must be buried with the body of the travelled Mishmi, to propitiate his spirit, and the nearest head available was forthwith taken. A blockade was at once proclaimed against the Chulikatta Mishmis, and

Unfortunate
consequences
of a visit
to Calcutta.

they were excluded from our markets, but as they were still able to obtain supplies from the neighbouring hill-men who were allowed to come to Sadiya, the blockade was not effective. In 1887-88, the matter was settled by the payment of a fine of Rs. 2,000, and the blockade was raised, as there seemed to be little hope that even if it were continued it would lead to the surrender of the culprits.

**Expedition
of 1899-1900.**

In 1894, the Mishmis were included in the blockade that was declared after the conclusion of the Abor expedition, as they were believed to have given the Abors their countenance and support, but they were once more admitted to our markets in 1897-98. In May 1899, a party of Bebejiyas attacked the small Khamti hamlet of Mitaigaon, killed two adults, wounded two others, one of them mortally, and carried off three guns and three children. An expedition was despatched in the following December, which succeeded in rescuing the captives and recovering one gun. There was no fighting and practically no opposition; but the natural difficulties of the country were immense, and steep passes rising to 8,000 feet in elevation, dense forests, cold, snow, sleet, and rain were obstacles which prevented the advance of the troops, and circumscribed their operations. The total strength of the Bebejiya tribe is estimated at between 3,000 and 4,000 souls living in 31 villages, and the territory occupied by them at less than 500 square miles. The Mishmis trade in musk, Mishmi *teeta*, a febrifuge much valued on the frontier, wax, dyed coats, baskets, skins, and swords

which they have obtained by barter from Thibet. An account of the manners and customs of the tribe will be found in Dalton's *Ethnology of Bengal*, which has been reproduced in a slightly abridged form in the *Statistical Account of Assam* by Sir William Hunter Vol. 1. p. 322-332, so that no further reference to the subject is necessary here.

During the last forty years, the Mishmis have not, on the whole, given the authorities much trouble; and during that period, they were only responsible for four murderous raids, in which eight persons lost their lives. This for a savage tribe is a comparatively good record, and there are at present no signs of any feeling of unrest on this portion of the frontier. A trifling restriction has, however, been imposed upon the Digarus. The men of this tribe are keen rubber tappers, and it has been found necessary to forbid them crossing the Brahmaputra and entering British territory from the south side of that river, as they try, whenever they can, to tap the trees in the Government forests and pass the product off as rubber brought from their hills.

West of the Mishmis come the Abors, though The Abors. this is a term which means nothing more than foreigner or savage, the *βαρβαρος* of the Greeks, and is somewhat loosely applied to the tribes inhabiting the hills between the Dibang and the Subansiri. The most important section of this tribe are the Padam or Bor Abors, who occupy the country lying between the Dibang and the Dihang. West of them come the Passi

Meyong Abors, and further west again less warlike tribes who are known as Gallongs, or Dobas, or Kurkur-khoa, or Mantaram Abors. An excellent description of the manners and customs of the Abors and of their villages has been published by Colonel Dalton in his *Ethnology of Bengal*, and has been reproduced in an abridged form by Sir William Hunter in his *Statistical Account of Assam* vol. I p. 333-342 so that further reference to this subject here would be superfluous.

The story of our relations with these savages down to the year 1884-85, is told in the *North-East Frontier of Bengal* by Sir A. Mackenzie, and it is unnecessary here to do more than briefly summarize this period of their history.

Of recent years the Padam or Bor Abors have been distinguished by their independent, not to say insolent bearing; but strangely enough the Abors are described in early correspondence as "far the best disposed of the hill tribes, though the most powerful, and never known to commit an act of unprovoked ravage or outrage on the villages of the plains." In support of this favourable judgment, it must be admitted that in 1826, they allowed Bedford and Wilcox to pay a friendly visit to their villages, while in 1840, they rendered assistance in the suppression of the rising of the Khamtis.

Collision
with Abors
in 1848.

The first collision with the Abors occurred in 1848, when Captain Vetch entered the hills inhabited by the Dobas, to demand the restoration of a body of Kaehari gold washers who had been carried off by

them. The captives were surrendered, but the camp was attacked at night, and the assailants only beaten off after hard fighting. Captain Vetch then burnt the village as a punishment for this piece of treachery and withdrew, without meeting with further opposition to the plains.

No further trouble was experienced for some years, and in 1855 Capt. Dalton paid a visit to the Abor village of Membo, but in 1858, a serious raid was made upon the plains. The Bihia village of Sengajan, only six miles north of Dibrugarh, was suddenly attacked and the inhabitants massacred, to punish them for having dared to move their village and deny the Abors the tribute they had formerly conceded to them.

Abortive ex-
pedition of
1858.

It was ascertained that men from the Kebang village of the Meyong tribe were the perpetrators of this outrage, and an attempt was made to follow up the raiders into the hills. The idea no doubt was excellent, but it was badly carried out. The troops did not succeed either in overtaking the Abors or reaching Kebang, and it was indeed with difficulty and some loss of credit to those in command that they got back to Dibrugarh. Arrangements were then made for the despatch of a larger force, but this too met with but a scant measure of success. The advance base was fixed at Rutumi, and the actual striking column only numbered 91 officers and men. The arrangements for the supply of provisions were defective, and the column was compelled to retire upon its base, after losing one European and three native soldiers besides coolies, without even having

reached Kebang. Too much confidence appears to have been placed in the friendly professions of the Abors inhabiting the outer range, who were most submissive to the advancing column, but, after it had passed, ambushed and killed the coolies bringing up supplies. It is seldom safe to trust to the friendly professions of the hillmen, when an expedition is in progress, yet strangely enough this very same mistake was made in the Abor expedition of 1893-94.

The expedition of 1859.

Emboldened by the failure of our soldiers to reach their villages, the Abors began to assume a still more truculent attitude. They advanced their outposts further down towards the plains, and it was evident that strong measures were required, if the outlying portions of the district were to be protected from their raids. Accordingly in 1859, an expedition was despatched which numbered in all 374 officers and men, with two 12-pounder howitzers and two mortars. The villages of Passi and Kinkong were stormed and burnt, but the enemy offered an obstinate resistance, holding no less than nine of the eleven stockades with which Passi had been fortified, and killing one of our men and wounding forty-four.

Raids in 1861 and subsequent submission.

The Passis then submitted, but the Meyongs continued to be hostile, and in 1861, cut up a Bihia village situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra, only 15 miles from Dibrugarh. Government then decided to establish a chain of forts along the frontier, when the Abors, overawed by this display of energy, came in to make their peace. In 1862 and the following year, various sections of the tribe entered into agreements

with the Deputy Commissioner, and were promised small allowances of iron hoes, salt, tobacco, rum, and opium so long as they remained of good behaviour. These agreements were loyally observed for several years, but the tribe on more than one occasion gave evidence of their jealous and intractable disposition. The Membo Abors for example in 1863, went off in a temper and refused to take their presents, because the Deputy Commissioner declined to allow them to treat him with impertinent familiarity; and in 1865, the Meyong Abors absented themselves, because they resented the fact that the price of salt had risen in Sadiya bazar. In 1866, the Bor Abors came down to meet the Deputy Commissioner, and entered into agreements like the rest, a fact which no doubt produced a good impression upon the other members of the tribe. Ten years later, the Trigonometrical Survey Party entered the hills, but the tribes showed signs of unrest and evidently regarded their advent with suspicion, and it was accordingly thought advisable to discontinue the operations.

At the end of 1884, Mr. Needham, the Assistant Political officer at Sadiya, visited the villages of Membo, Gina, Romkong, Balek, and Monku, and every where met with a hospitable reception. In the following year, he visited the Bor Abor villages of Padu, Kumku, and Silli; and at the begining of 1886, he returned to Membo with the object of throwing a suspension bridge accross the Siku. But though the Abor shad themselves asked for the erection of this bridge, they declined to allow the work to be carried out, alleging, as an excuse, the insufficiency of the

Mr. Needham visits the hills 1884-1886.

materials, though in reality they were influenced by distrust of the motives of the Government. On the occasion of these visits, the hillmen discussed with Mr. Needham the grievances which they professed to have against the Government, most of which were, however, of a somewhat frivolous description. They objected to the establishment of outposts near the hills, and to the orders prohibiting them from coming armed to Sadiya. They complained that the allowances paid to them were insufficient, that runaway slaves who had succeeded in escaping into our territory were not returned, and finally, a source of irritation that was easily removed, that the Mishmis had better accommodation provided for them when they visited Sadiya. The results of these visits were considered to be satisfactory. The Abors had not been visited since 1855, and it was thought that these tours conduced to a better understanding with the hill-men. At the same time, in the opinion of the Chief Commissioner, certain elements of difficulty and possible danger had been brought to light. Such was the confidence of these savages in their ability either to institute or repel attacks, that he was inclined to doubt whether any course of amenity or justice would have a beneficial effect, till they had been compelled to recognise the overwhelming strength of the British Government. In writing in this strain he sounded a note of warning, unfortunately fully justified by the subsequent conduct of the tribe.

**Increasing
Insolence of
the Abors
1887-189..**

In 1887, the Abors abducted a Miri who had crossed the Inner Line without obtaining a pass, but the man

escaped, and two other minor acts of aggression were adjusted without difficulty. Two years later a much more serious outrage was committed. Four Miris were decoyed across the Inner Line by men from the Meyong villages of Yomsing and Ledum, and then cruelly put to death. A blockade of the Passi-Meyong country was forthwith established, by posting guards at Kathalguri, Dipimukh, Hilonimur, and Pobamukh, and so great was the inconvenience caused, that the powerful village of Kebang compelled the offending communities to send in apologies with a propitiatory offering of sixteen mithun (*bos frontalis*). The fine and apology were accepted and nothing more was done, but the Bor Abors as well as the Meyongs showed signs of giving trouble. In 1889, they seized some mithun which were being taken by the Mishmis along the Bomjur road, on the ground that the Mishmis had no right to trade with us direct, but released them on receipt of a remonstrance from the Assistant Political Officer. In 1891–92 and 1892–93 the Abors from Damroh, the largest and most powerful of the Bor Abor villages, failed to attend and draw their allowances at Sadiya, and, in November 1893, their veiled hostility broke out in open violence. On the 27th of that month three military police sepoy, who were patrolling between Bomjur and Kerimpani, were murdered in British territory and their rifles carried off. Less than a month later, a second attack was made on a patrol of seven sepoy, three miles south of Kerimpani, and one of them was killed and another wounded before their assailants could be beaten off.

**The Abor
expedition of
1893-94.**

Such insolent violation of our territory could only be adequately punished by an expedition, and in view of the difficulties experienced in the past, it was decided that the force should consist of not less than 500 men, 100 of whom were regular sepoys, and the remainder military police. Bomjur was occupied without resistance on January 15th 1894, and after leaving 100 men to guard the base, the rest of the force advanced on January 20th to Dambuk, a powerful village twelve miles distant from Bomjur. The Abors opposed this force almost from the very outset, and it was ultimately stopped by a huge stockade of trees, on which the mountain guns made no impression, and which was subsequently found to be 1,800 yards in length. The stockade was, however, captured with a loss of three men killed and twenty-seven wounded, and on the following day Dambuk was occupied, the inhabitants having fled. Sipu and Silluk were then visited, the stockades erected to bar our passage captured, and, though the Abors rushed the baggage coolies, they only succeeded in killing and wounding eight, and were driven off after leaving ten of their own party dead.

**The advance
on Damroh.**

It was then decided to punish the Damroh group of villages for having sent men to oppose our advance on Dambuk and Silluk. Membo and Padu were occupied in February, but, as they offered no resistance, were not destroyed, and preparations were then made for the advance on Damroh. Owing to difficulties of carriage, it was decided to leave the bulk of the rations at Bordak, under the charge of the *gam* or Abor chiy

of Gina and the *gam* of Padu, together with a small detachment of sick and weakly fighting men and a few followers. The rest of the force proceeded to advance to Silli, Dukku, and lastly to a camp on the Yamne river. On the Yamne the Abors again began to display a hostile attitude, and Lieutenant East was wounded by an arrow; but his escort managed to kill three of the enemy before they succeeded in making their escape into the jungle. On February 27th, Mr. Needham determined to leave one hundred men to guard the camp at Yamne, and to attempt to reach Damroh with the remainder of his force. Great difficulty was, however, experienced in discovering the path, and as at 2 P.M. Damroh was still invisible, he reluctantly decided to return. In the evening a *gam* from Dukku came in to say that he had been sent from Damroh to sue for peace, and Mr. Needham promised to receive a deputation on the following day, but, though he waited for it, none appeared. Information was then received to the effect that the villages which had already submitted had determined to oppose the return of the force, as it was thought that they would be short of ammunition, and fears began to be entertained for the safety of the detachment at Bordak.

The return march was accordingly begun, and on reaching Bordak on March 4th, it was seen that these fears were unfortunately only too well founded. The camp was gutted, the rations removed or destroyed, and the unfortunate sepoy and followers were stretched lifeless on the ground. A follower who had succeeded

The return march and massacre at Bordak.

in escaping and swimming to the opposite bank of the river, stated that some two or three hundred Abor coolies had come into the camp with the ostensible object of taking on the rations. As the sepoy and followers were carrying the stores out of the godown, they were suddenly set upon by the Abors and cut down; the total loss amounting to a subadar, a havildar, fourteen sepoy, and nineteen followers. As a punishment for this piece of treachery, the villages of Kumku, Padu, and Membo were destroyed, and the force finally reached Sadiya on March 14th.

The results of the expedition were summarised as follows in the report.

“The expedition on the whole has been eminently successful. We have taught the Abors a severe lesson. We have destroyed the villages concerned in the murder of our patrols, and all other villages that opposed us in any way. We have caused the Abors considerable loss in killed and wounded, and much property has been destroyed. We have shown them that their mountainous country can be traversed by us, that we can visit any of their villages, and that their strongest stockades cannot stop us. Our only misfortune has been the massacre at Bordak, and this was owing to treachery.”

Blockade
imposed on
Bor Abors
and Passi
Meyongs.

The hill men were still in possession of several of our rifles and of property looted at Bordak, and a blockade was accordingly proclaimed against all the tribes living north of Sadiya and on the left bank of the Dihang.

The payment of *posa** to these villages was discontinued, and the inhabitants of Bomjur were prohibited from rebuilding their village on the former site. The last named order was treated with absolute contempt, and as the Abors did not remove the houses they had re-erected when called upon to do so, they were burnt by the Assistant Political Officer in March 1895. Even this was not enough to teach them that we were in earnest. They once more began rebuilding, and, when Mr. Needham visited Bomjur some nine months later, he found 23 new houses there, which again he had to burn. After this second visit the Bomjur Abors realized that the orders of the Government of India in a matter of this kind could not be disregarded with impunity, and the village was definitely removed to a site a little further up the river. The results of the blockade were eminently satisfactory. During 1894 most of the rifles were returned, and, though some of the stolen property still was missing, the Abors in 1895 brought in a large boat and nine mithun in its place. In 1896, the blockade against the Passi Meyongs was raised, as it had only been imposed from fear lest the Bor Abors might supply themselves with salt and other articles they required, through the agency of their kinsmen. The blockade against the Bor Abors was maintained till 1900.

In 1897, the Passi Meyongs, urged on by that vague impulse which for centuries has been sending successive Movement
of the Abors
into the
Plains.

* *Posa* is an allowance given to hill tribes, generally in lieu of certain rights to levy taxes from the submontane tracts to which they established a claim in the days of native rule.

waves of immigrants from the hills into the valley of the Brahmaputra, began to settle in the plains; but, when called upon to pay poll tax, demurred on the ground that the land which they were occupying lay outside the Inner Line. The objection was, however, withdrawn after they had been visited by Mr. Needham, and they were clearly warned that British territory extended up to the foot of the hills. In the same year some Bor Abors settled in the plains on the left bank of the Dihang, north of the Sibiya river. They too claimed the land as outside the Inner Line, but as they had come there without leave, they were ordered to withdraw, and on their failing to do so, the village was incontinently burnt. In 1901, it was found that about 50 families had settled on the Dihang above Sibiya-mukh; and it was decided that as the blockade had been raised, they might be allowed to remain, provided that they did not attempt to move south of Sibiya-mukh, that they were of good behaviour, and that they paid poll tax as an admission of the fact that they were in British territory. No trouble has as yet been experienced from this colony.

The Passi Meyongs. After the blockade of the Passi Meyongs was raised in 1896, they began to trade with Dibrugarh in preference to Sadiya. It was considered that this was undesirable, as they ceased to come under the influence of the Assistant Political Officer, and in 1901, orders were issued prohibiting them from visiting Dibrugarh, but in many instances they were evaded. This tribe prefers a claim to the country lying between their hills and the Inner Line,

and occasionally attempts to assert its title by levying blackmail on timber cutters, fishermen, and others. Government has, however, continuously laid down that British territory extends right up to the foot of the hills, and that the Inner Line has only been laid down for the purposes of administrative convenience.

The Doba Abors have never within recent years been a serious source of anxiety to the Government. They come down to Sisi and Dibrugarh, and, as they were said to harass the raiyats in the Sisi and Dhemaji mauzas, a police station and guard were located at Kathalguri about six miles west of Sisi in 1889. Subsequently the guard was removed to Sisi, and the thana to Dhemaji. In 1903, the Mantaram and Sarusaku Gallongs raided the Jaktoli village in the Dhemaji mauza, looted four houses, carried off two girls, and injured several people. It was found that the raid was due to the dishonest conduct of Tatum, a Sarusaku gam, who had misappropriated money due to the offending parties. The two girls and most of the stolen property were soon brought in, the raiders were punished with a fine, and the dishonest gam was confined for a year as a political dētenu in the jail at Dibrugarh.

The hills to the west of the Abor country are inhabited by the Miris, who are divided into four main sections; the Ghasi Miris who live east of the Subansiri, the Saraks who live on the right bank of that river, and the Panibotias and Tarbotias who inhabit the country further to the west.

The Miris appear to have been employed by the Ahoms as soldiers, and their services were no doubt of value when expeditions were sent across the Assam range; but they seem to be naturally of a very peaceful disposition, and no tribes on the frontier have caused less embarrassment to the British Government. It has never been necessary to send an expedition into their mountain fastnesses, and they have shewn their appreciation of a settled form of Government by migrating in considerable numbers to the plains. Murderous raids are practically unknown, and, though they have occasionally carried off people from British territory to emphasize their grievances, no difficulty has ever been experienced in recovering the captives.

The Daflas. In the hills to the west of the district live the Daflas, a tribe who have never given much trouble in Lakhimpur. Such complications as have from time to time arisen, were generally due to quarrels between the hillmen and the Daflas who have settled in the plains.

Raid in 1887. One of these cases occurred in October 1887, when a party of hillmen raided the settlement of Taranggam on the west bank of the Dikrang river, about three quarters of a mile from the Harmati garden. Fifteen persons in all were carried away, and Tarang, with his brother and wife, were killed. This was not, however, a case in which it was thought necessary for Government to interfere. There seemed little doubt that Tarang had drawn down this summary vengeance on himself, by the oppressive and arbitrary treatment to which he had subjected several of the hillmen when

passing by his village; and only a month before the raid, he had been warned by the Assistant Commissioner of the probable consequences of his actions, and advised to move further from the hills. The raid took place just beyond the Inner Line, a fact of which the hillmen seem to have been well-aware, and the Chief Commissioner did not consider it necessary to intervene in this domestic feud. The most disturbing factors, amongst the Daflas adjoining Lakhimpur, are two *gams* in the Dikrang Valley called Muji and Chiring. In the winter of 1893-94, these *gams* seized some plain Daflas who had gone up to the hills, and it was found necessary to detain some of Muji's people in the plains, before he could be induced to return the captives.

In February 1899, a rather curious incident occurred, which shows how strong is the desire amongst these hill people to keep up their population. In these small communities the balance of power is easily affected by a slight increase in the death rate, and every person counts. This no doubt had much to do with the development of the law, so common on the frontier, that life should be taken for life in intertribal warfare. On this particular occasion, it appears that Chengmara, the village of a *gam* called Pareng, had been raided by hill men from the Dikrang. Pareng thereupon descended to the plains, and after enlisting in his service some Daflas from the village of Katoni near the north trunk road, attacked a party of hill men from the Poma Pani, who happened to be stopping in the neighbourhood. Pareng had no previous quarrel with these

A Dafla
press gang
in 1899.

people, and seems to have been solely actuated by the desire of increasing the population of his village, but in the course of the affray three men were injured and four were carried off. The Police however, were promptly on the spot, the captives were recovered, and Pareng convicted and sentenced to two years rigorous imprisonment.

The Ankas
or Apatan-
nangs.

The Ankas or Apatanangs, as they are sometimes called, are closely akin to the Daflas, and occupy a fertile valley, lying to the north of the hills inhabited by that tribe. This valley is described by Mr. McCabe, who visited it in 1897, as a magnificent plateau, some ten miles in length, laid out in highly cultivated and artificially irrigated terraces, which are watered from the Kali river. To the force which had reached it after an arduous march over hills covered with dense forest, it seems to have appeared a veritable land of promise. The level of the plain was broken up by small isolated hillocks and low pine clad spurs; the stubble on the ground showed that there had been an abundant harvest, and primroses, violets, and wild strawberries recalled the meadows and woods of England.

Eight villages were situated amongst the rice fields in fairly close proximity to the hills.

hill country adapted to their needs and circumstances. This, however, has not prevented them from migrating to the plains and to levels in large numbers and cultivating more fertile soil which they find in existence of the plains by one of them. It is said that the Miris discovered had killed a bird, finding in its stomach grains of rice. Thereupon he, with others, watched carefully the flight of the birds, and proceeding in the direction where they flew came eventually to the rice-growing plains.

THEIR FOOD AND CLOTHING.

Formerly their chief food was the flesh of the animals they hunted and killed, and their clothing was made of the skins. The men wear a species of coat, composed of a strip of coloured cloth, the head put through a slit in the middle, and having a deep fringe at its end, reaching half-way down the thighs. Women have a coloured cloth wrapped round them reaching to the knee. They also wear in lieu of the above, which is chiefly in among those who live on the lower levels a short skirt, or rather band, of plaited bamboo work in decorative colours and designs. Baskets both sexes carry on their backs, supported by a band round the forehead of fine plaited bamboo, are made by themselves as also are the hats of similar material worn by the men. These sometimes have feathers, varying in number according to rank and qualifications of the wearer, as usual with most of the hill tribes on the frontier.

With dialectic differences the language of the Miris and the Abors is practically the same. In character the tribes are very different. The Miris are naturally a quiet, peaceable people whereas the Abors are headstrong and turbulent among themselves. They say of themselves that they are "as tigers, and two can dwell in one den." Their name in Ar means "independent."

the other hand, the inferiority of the Ankas in arms and physique reduces them to a comparatively low level as an aggressive power. They are smaller and of a less robust build than the Dafas, and their peculiar characteristic is the tail of plaited cane, which they habitually wear around their waists. In 1889, the valley of Hong was visited by Mr. Crowe of the Joyhing Tea Estate, who was on friendly terms with the hillmen on the frontier, and four years later this gentleman escorted Captain Dunne into their country. The German explorer Herr Von Ehlers entered the valley in 1895, but as he was not like Mr. Crowe, personally known to the people, he met with but an inhospitable reception, and was robbed and turned out into the fields. In 1896, a party of Ankas put up at the house of one Podu Miri near the Kadam Tea Estate, and when the family had peacefully lain down to sleep, killed Podu and his stepson, and carried away four captives. Three months later, a small expeditionary force was despatched into the hills, which reached the valley of Hong, rescued the prisoners, and punished the Ankas by compelling them to release six persons whom they had carried off a short time previously from a friendly

Dafle village.

ABORS AND MIRIS.

We have received from a correspondent who has resided for many years on the Assam frontier the following account of the Abors and Miri tribes :—

The country inhabited by the Abors is beyond that of the Miris, which tribe acts as a channel of communication between the Ab channel and the plains people, the name "Miri" meaning "a go-between." Although the tribes are quite distinct, they are very dependent on one another, and a considerable amount of trading is done between them. The Miris are by nature a lazy people, and are content to get many things from the Abors which they might easily produce themselves. Thus they obtain a dye, from the juice of a plant called "munjeet," which they use for their cloths and cane-work. Abors work in metals, from them the Miris obtain their cooking vessels their *dacos* (native swords), and the *Deo gun* (metal bells with inscriptions, used in certain religious rites. From the Miris the Abors obtain Assamese cloths, silks, rice, salt, other produce of the plains. Between the two tribes there is a good deal of exchange in slaves and of intermarriage, the latter being a mark of barter.

The religious theories of the Miris are very well defined, but they believe in a C Spirit who rules over the souls of those departed, and whom it is necessary to propitiate in this life, lest evil befall in a future state. Religion with them, as with most of the tribes consists mainly of propitiation rather than worship. They have, too, a belief that

Nagas.

exception of the Sarkari Nagas whose villages are situated north of the Tirap, live beyond the frontiers of the district. In the hills south of Jaipur live the Namsangias, and further south again the Borduarias; while some way to the east and south of the Tirap live the Rangpangs.

The Namsangias and Borduarias.

In 1884, it was estimated that the Namsangia tribe numbered about 6,000 souls, while the Borduarias were about 3,000 more; but the data are so imperfect that it is impossible to place much reliance on these estimates. The two tribes are at feud with one another, but do not, as a rule, carry their quarrels into British territory, though from time to time unpleasant incidents have taken place, which have necessitated the intervention of the British Government. A typical case occurred in 1888, when a party of Namsangia Nagas carried off six of their fellow tribesmen from the Dillih village, and put two of them to death. The Deputy Commissioner fined the Namsangia chiefs Rs. 1,000 and fifteen guns for this violation of our frontier. The Chief Commissioner considered this punishment to be quite inadequate, but he abstained from interfering with the decision of the local officer, as he was unwilling to do anything, which might possibly tend to weaken his authority.

Gradual extension of our influence over the hills.

The development of the coal mines near Margherita, and the opening of the Makum garden offered a fair field for the employment of Naga labour on jungle cutting and similar rough work, of which the hillmen were not slow to avail themselves: and, in 1893, one company had more than 2,000 Nagas, working at one time. They

caused, however, considerable annoyance by their petty thefts of cattle, iron implements, and similar articles; and in order to check these depredations, the strength of the guard at Ledo was raised in 1897 from 11 to 20 men, and an outpost of 10 men was stationed at Tikak. In 1902, these two outposts were abolished, and in their place one was established on the Lungchong Hill, a day's march south of Namdang, with the object of protecting a peaceful tribe of Nagas, who, in token of their submission to our authority, had assumed the title of Sarkari. Subsequently, in 1904, the Inner Line was thrown back to the Tirap, and the hills inhabited by these people were definitely incorporated in the district. There are few places where civilization and savagery are brought into closer proximity than at Margherita. A striking instance of this occurred in 1902, when two Nagas, who were peacefully walking along the railway in search of work, were kidnapped and carried off into the hills. One of them escaped, but the other was taken to the Yogli village, and when the captors were ordered to give him up, they replied that he was not a British subject, and that they proposed to use him as a human sacrifice. The Deputy Commissioner accordingly visited the place with a small escort, rescued the prisoner, and, as the people declined to come in and meet him, burnt the village.

No attempt is made to interfere with inter-tribal feuds beyond the Inner Line, but the chiefs of the Nam-sangia and Borduaria tribes have signed agreements to respect our territory, and to abstain from annoying

travellers using the paths leading to the plains. Few tribes beyond the frontier are more amenable to control. They speak Assamese, they have embraced the Hindu religion, and, as they earn large sums of money by trading or labouring in the plains, exclusion from our territory would, entail a heavy punishment. The Borduaria Raja holds 200 bighas* of land revenue free in the plains, while the Namsangia Raja is paid Rs. 450 a year on account of the Hukanjuri tea seed garden. There are thus ample means of bringing pressure on the tribe without entering their country, and the hills themselves are easy of access, and present no special difficulties to the advance of small bodies of men. They were visited by the Deputy Commissioner in 1901, and he recorded the following note upon the people and their customs.

**Description
of Namsan-
gia and Bor-
duaria. Na-
gas.**

These two tribes are our nearest neighbours on the Jaipur side. They are closely related and were originally no doubt one people. Now, however, they are on anything but good terms. The Borduarias are considerably the more powerful, but each has too wholesome a respect for the other power, to indulge in open warfare. For a long time the Namsangias had to recognise the superiority of the Borduarias, and, when an animal was killed by the former, a rib was given to the latter. This custom has now been discontinued, and the chief reason of the constant feuds is that the Borduarias still wish to be acknowledged as the paramount tribe, while the Namsangias claim equality.

I halted a day in the Borduaria village, and examined it with some care. The village proper contains some two hundred houses, and on each of the outlying spurs is a group of houses, which serves as an advanced post. The Borduarias assured me that they could them-

* A bigha is about one third of an acre.

selves put a thousand warriors in the field, and they are allied with other villages and tribes, such as the Kaimai, the Paniduarias, the Palongias, etc. The Borbanchangs are said to be more powerful than the Borduarias, and the Bormithunias are in alliance with the Namsangias. I am not aware on what information the strength of these Nagas, as given in Mackenzie's North-East Frontier, is based, but doubt the accuracy of the figures. Time did not permit of my visiting any other villages, and without doing so, no definite information can be had.

As regards religion, customs, and means of livelihood, the Borduarias and Namsangias can be taken together. They are Hindus now, adherents of one of the Sibsagar gosains. According to their own story, they have been Hindus from the earliest times, but in reality their conversion is probably of recent date. All enquiries on this subject proved fruitless. On our way down from the Borduaria village, we passed two separate spots, which Bor Dangariyas (friendly spirits) were believed to inhabit, and each Naga of our party piously threw his twig or leaf on the heaps that marked the places. Some of the other tribes are wholly or partly Hinduised, but on this point reports varied considerably.

The manufacture of salt is carried on to a very considerable extent. In the course of my tour I saw 15 or 16 primitive stills, and was informed that there are several others. The method of manufacture is as follows :—

Wells have been sunk at various places and lined with hollow tree trunks. From these water with a slightly saline taste is baled out and stored in rough bamboo vessels. Each well has close by one or more rude furnaces of baked clay, open at the top. The furnace is charged with fuel, the bamboo vessels are placed side by side across the opening, and a fire is maintained till the process of evaporation is complete and only salt crystals are left in the vessels. This salt the Nagas use, and trade both among themselves and with the people in the plains.

The poppy is cultivated further back in the hills. I saw none in the course of my tour, but was shown several poppy heads from which the juice had been extracted. It is possible that a certain amount of hill opium finds its way into our territories.

**Economic
development
of the
district.**

Apart from the troubles on the frontier, the history of Lakhimpur, since it came under British rule, is one of continuous expansion, for which it would be hard to find a parallel in any other rural district of India. In the last half of the nineteenth century the population increased nearly fivefold, and the settled area nearly six fold; an extraordinary development for a district in which there is only one town, and that a town with barely 11,000 inhabitants. These wonderful results have been obtained by the introduction of a settled form of Government, by the improvement of communications, and by the application of the magic wand of British capital to a healthy but sparsely populated district, with great natural resources.

**Lakhimpur
Assamese in
little more
than name.**

Some of the consequences of this development are perhaps a little curious. Lakhimpur the most remote and easterly portion of Assam, is Assamese in little more than name. Nowhere in the valley are there many Assamese of wealth, intelligence, and influence, but in no district are there fewer than in Lakhimpur. In this portion of the Province, capital and labour, enterprise and education, trade and crafts are all alike represented by the foreigner. Lakhimpur has in fact been "discovered" by the British. They found it a remote inhospitable jungle, inhabited by a rude and scanty population, who were at the mercy of the even ruder tribes who haunt the hills that surround it on three sides. They felled the forests and turned them into prosperous tea gardens, they imported labourers in thousands, whose requirements in grain and clothing

the Marwari merchants were not slow to fill; and thus it has come about that all the wealth and all the weight and influence in the district are in the hands of foreigners. In the Dibrugarh subdivision alone, there was a European population in 1901, of 431 souls, and in many essentials Dibrugarh might be regarded as no less English than Australia or the Cape. Amongst the native community, commerce and capital are centred in the merchants of Marwar, while the keen witted Bengali dominates the bar and occupies nearly all the posts for which special intelligence is required. The huge labour force of Lakhimpur is drawn from every portion of India except Assam,* and thousands of these industrious coolies have now settled down to cultivation, and are reaping the rich profits from agriculture which are despised or neglected by the Assamese. It must not, however, be supposed that the indigenous inhabitants have suffered from the advent of the foreigner. They have increased considerably in numbers, and, had there been no immigration, they would undoubtedly have been less affluent than they are at the present day. They have failed to take advantage of the extraordinary opportunities that have been offered to them, and they have obtained a comparatively small share of the great store of wealth that has been extracted from the district; but for this the tastes and inclinations of the people are to blame. The Assamese of Lakhimpur prefer, as a rule, indolence and opium to a strenuous and active life, and so long as they are dominated by these faineant ideals, it

* Not 3 per cent. of the labour force are indigenous inhabitants of Assam.

is idle to expect that they will make much progress along the path of material comfort.

**Exploration
beyond the
frontier.**

Neither on the north, east, or south, have the boundaries of the district ever been definitely laid down; and the story of the various attempts that have been made to penetrate the mysteries of the jungle covered mountains, that surround the plains of Lakhimpur, come thus within the four corners of our brief. Apart from the work done by the expeditions despatched against the Apatanangs, the Abors, and the Mishmis, exploration has mainly been carried on in three directions;—up the Brahmaputra eastward to the valley of Rima or the Zayul-Chu; into the Khamti territory in the south-east; and across the Patkai into the Hukong valley.

The following account of the various expeditions into the Zayul valley, prior to the one headed by Mr. Needham, is reproduced from some papers in the Secretariat*

**First
attempts
to penetrate
the Zayul
valley.**

“The existence of a route into Tibet, by the upper waters of the Brahmaputra, has been known to the Indian Government ever since the British occupation of Assam. A list of the stages from Sadiya, numbering twenty altogether, was obtained by Lieutenant Neufville in 1825, and published in the *Asiatic Researches*. In 1826 Captain Wilcox succeeded in advancing three quarters of the way to Rima, along the southern or left bank of the Brahmaputra, but was there stopped by the refusal of the Miju Mishmis to allow him to pass through their country. Ten years later, in October-November 1836, Dr. Griffiths followed the same route to a point about half way between Sadiya and Rima, and then crossed the Brahmaputra, and visited some Mishmi villages on the northern side; but he too, was deterred from attempting

* Letter No. 1194 dated the 21st June 1886 from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department.

further progress, by the refusal of the easterly Mishmi chiefs to give him a safe conduct. Lieutenant E. A. Rowlatt, in November-December 1844, was the first explorer who took the route which Mr. Needham subsequently followed, along the right or north bank of the Brahmaputra. He got as far as the river Du (or Mdaun) within sixty miles of the Tibetan border, and turned back on being told that the intervening country was destitute of inhabitants, a state of things which does not exist, now whatever may have been the case sixty years ago. In 1851 the French missionary, M. Krick, succeeded in entering Tibet by the same route, and in returning to Assam with safety; and in 1854 he penetrated into the Zayul valley a second time, in the company of M. Bovry, but both the travellers were barbarously murdered by the Mishmi chief Kaisha. In December 1869 and January 1870, Mr. J. T. Cooper attempted the journey towards Tibet by the route along the southern or left bank of the Brahmaputra, but was prevented from proceeding by the refusal of the Miju chiefs to admit him into their country. His farthest point was several marches short of that attained by Wilcox in 1826. In 1879, the Khamti chief Chowsa, who accompanied Mr. Needham on his expedition, got as far as the borders of Zayul by the northerly route (Lieutenant Rowlatt's), but was prevented by the Tibetan authorities from entering the valley.

The route taken by Mr. Needham from Sadiya to Rima is estimated to be about 187 miles in length, and can be most easily considered, if divided into five sections. The first section from Sadiya to Tamemukh lies entirely in the plains, and is 46 miles in length. It runs for the most part up the bed of the Brahmaputra, or through the jungle on its banks, and a good cold weather track could probably be cleared without much difficulty. The second stage, 24 miles in length, to Chowsa's village, includes some rough marching over various ranges, the highest pass being 4,500 feet above the sea. The third stage of 17 miles to the Dalei river is rather difficult, and in one place the route usually

Mr.
Needham's
march in
1855-56.

followed by the Mishmis runs along the face of a precipice some two or three hundred feet above the Brahmaputra, in which there are merely a few niches in the rock to afford a precarious foot hold. A better path which is passable for cattle is, however, to be found higher up the cliff. The fourth section is 74 miles in length, and comprises the country traversed between the Dalei and the frontier of Zayul. Here too there was some difficult walking, and more than once the path consisted of little more than a few steps cut on the face of the cliff. The fifth stage of 26 miles from the border of Thibet to Rima presented no serious difficulties to the travellers. Above the Dalei, the valley of the Brahmaputra is about half a mile in breadth, and Mishmi villages in their small clearings in the jungle were not unfrequently to be seen. The river is crossed on cane hawsers which sag towards the centre. The traveller puts a loop of cane round the small of his back and in this way slides down to the centre of the rope, and then works his way with hands and feet up the further side. As these ropes are often suspended at some distance above the river, these bridges, for a person with sensitive nerves, leave much to be desired.

**Description
of Zayul
Valley.**

M. Krick is said to have described the valley of Zayul as a tract cultivated as far as the eye could reach, and abounding in herds of oxen, asses, horses, and mules, and in groves of bamboo, laurels, orange, citron, and peach trees. The Pandit A. K. who lived in Zayul from the 23rd May to the 9th July 1882, describes the winter crops as rice, millets, and pulses, and the spring crops as

wheat, barley, and mustard ; the domestic animals being oxen, half-bred yaks, horses, pigs, and fowls. Mr. Needham also found a good deal of terraced cultivation, but his description of the valley is couched in less glowing terms than those of his two predecessors, though, as he met with a far from hospitable reception, his opportunities for examining its resources were but small. The Mishmis trade with the inhabitants of Zayul, exchanging grass, bark, dye stuff, musk pods, and deer skins, for salt, cattle, woollen coats, metal vessels, swords, beads, silver amulets, and ammunition; but neither the Miju clan of Mishmis nor the Thibetans are allowed to trade directly with Assam. Little difficulty would, however, be experienced in constructing a practicable trade route, if on political or commercial grounds it was considered to be desirable to do so.*

South of the Brahmaputra, more than one expedition has gone to Putau the capital of the Bor Khamti country. The first officer to explore in this direction was Wilcox, who reached Bor Khamti in 1826, but for many years he had no followers. Of recent years three separate parties of explorers have visited the valley. Colonel Woodthorpe and Major Macgregor in 1884-85, and Mr. Errol Gray in 1892-93 entered Bor Khamti from Assam, while in 1895, Prince Henry of Orleans passed through it in the course of his journey from Tonkin to Calcutta. The first stage of the journey follows the Noa Dihing river for 67 miles and calls for little comment. The

**Expeditions
to Bor
Khamti.**

* Mr. Needham's diary of his journey will be found in Assam Secretariat File No. 1735 J. of 1886.

country is sparsely peopled with Khamtis and Singphos, but presents no special difficulties to the traveller. The path then runs up the Diyun valley as far as the Merit, a distance of about 45 miles. The country is, for the most part, covered with dense forest, haunted by elephant, rhinoceros, and other big game, and in places the going is extremely bad. After leaving the Diyun, the track crosses a pass 8,300 feet above the level of the sea, which in the winter time is often deep in snow. Two marches further on, the Makoshat mountain has to be crossed at a height of nearly 9,000 feet, but the path then sinks to the Phungma river which is less than 5,000 feet above sea level. From there it is three short marches to Langnu, which is situated at the southern end of the Bor Khamti valley about 1,500 feet above the sea.

**The Bor
Khamti
Valley.**

The Bor Khamti valley is said to be on the average about fifteen miles in width, though in places it is as much as twenty-five. The soil is very fertile and large crops of rice are raised which are stored in excellent granaries. Prince Henry of Orleans, though little predisposed in favour of the people, describes the place in glowing terms. As far as the eye could reach stretch rice fields, yellow as the plains of Lombardy. It is a splendid territory, fertile in soil and well watered, where tropical and temperate culture flourish side by side, and the inhabitants are protected on three fronts by mountains. The population was estimated by Mr. Gray to be about 11,000 souls, 3,000 of whom perhaps would be fighting men, living in 17 villages. The village of the Langnu Raja was surrounded by a double

palisade of planks interlaced with split bamboo. The houses were large commodious structures, raised on piles, and in the Raja's house there was a hall of audience, fifty feet long and proportionately wide. The people are in fact much more civilized than most of the tribes on the north-east frontier, and there is a temple in the valley, ninetyfive feet high, adorned with a gilded cupola, and with several statues of Buddha, some of which are carved from fine white marble.

But, if civilized, the Khamtis are most extortionate, and every chief and person of importance expected to receive a handsome present. More than one gun was handed over by both the British parties, and a considerable store of opium was expended. The people were willing to buy and sell, but it was only for a price. At Putau, the capital, Mr. Gray could obtain no firewood for his followers till he had bartered away some fifteen rupees worth of opium. He was anxious to ascertain whether he could not get through to China, but was informed that it was hardly practicable. The country was occupied by Khakus, a wild and savage people living in independant villages, each of which would demand a substantial sum for permission to pass through their territory. A really wealthy traveller, prepared to scatter opium and guns with both hands, might possibly get through, but for such a man there was serious risk of being robbed en route.

Mr. Gray was accordingly compelled to return along the path by which he came, and it was reserved for a Frenchman to be the first European to travel over land

Prince
Henry of
Orlean's
travels.

between China and Assam. In 1895, Prince Henry of Orleans started on his journey westward, from a place called Tsekou, on the upper waters of the Mekong. The initial stages of the journey were fairly easy, and as far as the Salween, the party found it possible to take their mules, but after crossing that river the path became only possible for men on foot. The people, however, offered no objections to the advance of the explorers; and they were willing to act as porters, and ready to sell food at reasonable prices. Between Deidoum and Mandoum, the path in many places is very bad. "Jagged points, slippery surfaces, crumbling brinks, creepers that tripped, worm eaten trunks up which to swarm, almost vertical ladders to climb, formed of wooden pickets driven into the face of over hanging bluffs, often hauled by sheer strength of a couple of men and liana drag ropes over boulders"—such is the description given by the gallant French explorer.

But the people, far from being the avaricious robbers depicted by the Khamtis, showed themselves far from unreasonable in their demands. Near Mandoum the offer of a spoon was sufficient to procure a competent guide, and all along the route, as far as the Khamti valley, comparatively little difficulty was experienced in obtaining food and porters at fairly moderate rates. The path, though bad in places, presented no insuperable obstacles, and though the travelling was rough, the existence of a friendly population largely facilitated the movements of the party. But in the Khamti valley everything was changed. At the first village they

were called upon for a present, a novel demand which had little to commend it. An offer of five rupees was met by a demand for one hundred, whereupon the party fell in, guns to the front, and the villagers quickly contented themselves with one tenth of the sum that they had originally asked. The conduct of these people was but of a piece with that of the other inhabitants of Bor Khamti. Every one demanded something, and, short of actual molestation, they behaved like actual brigands. Their treatment of Prince Henry does not seem to have materially differed from that accorded to the other parties sent from India; but how unlike it was to the conduct of the tribes inhabiting the territory between China and Bor Khamti is to be judged from the explorer's indignation and disgust. And these, forsooth, were the people who had told Mr. Gray that the blackmail levied between Bor Khamti and China would almost be prohibitive. It seems, in fact, to be fairly clear that the march from Bor Khamti to China is easier than the journey from Bor Khamti to Assam. The natural difficulties are not greater, if as great, and the whole question is much simplified by the existence of a number of villages from which supplies and porters can be obtained. At the same time, it is difficult to believe that this path could ever advantageously be opened up as a trade route. The distances are too great, the physical difficulties too serious, and, in Prince Henry's opinion, it has small chance of ever becoming an artery of commerce.*

* For further particulars see (1) Account of Col. Woodthorpe's expedition up the Dihing and into Bor Khamti, (2) Mr. Gray's diary printed in *F. A. Progs.*, May 1894, Nos. 7-15, (3) From Tonkin to India by Prince Henry D'Orleans.

The Patkai

For many centuries there has been communication between Lakhimpur and Burma over the Patkai Hills. It was by this route that the Ahoms entered Assam in the 13th century, and it was across the Patkai that the Burmese retired nearly 600 years later, when they were driven out of the Brahmaputra Valley by the British troops. The first European to cross this range was that eminent traveller Dr. Griffiths in the winter of 1836-37, but for many years he had no followers. In 1892, Mr. Needham crossed the hills to Maingkhwan, and there met an expedition which had advanced up the Hukong valley from Burma. In the cold weather of 1895-96, a reconnaissance survey was made for the purpose of estimating the cost of carrying a railway over the hills to Burma. The party marched *via* Ningrangnong and Namkri, to the summit of the Patkai, where their camp was pitched at about 4,000 feet above sea level. They then followed the Nongyong to its junction with the Loglai, went down that river till it fell into the Turung, and marched along the Turung into the Hukong valley. The party experienced no difficulties in this journey, but it was clear that the cost of carrying a railway over the hills would be extremely heavy. The Hukong valley is very fertile, but is sparsely peopled, and the long march over the hills is a serious obstacle to the development of much trade between Burma and Lakhimpur.

Archaeology
The ruins
near the
Dibang
gorge.

Some of the most interesting remains in the district are the ruins of two forts between the gorges of the Dikrang and the Dibang, about 24 miles north of Sadiya, which are assigned by tradition, the one to Bhismaka,

the other to Sisupal. The following description of these forts is taken from the *Calcutta Review*.*

“The extent of Sisupal’s fort”, observes Captain Rowlatt in his ‘Report of an Expedition into the Mishmi Hills,’ “is considerable, as it took me about four hours to walk along one side of its faces. The defence is double, consisting of a rampart of stiff red clay which, as the surrounding soil appears of a different nature, must have been brought from some distance. Below this rampart is a terrace of about twenty yards in breadth, beyond which the side of the hill is perpendicularly scarped and varies from ten to thirty feet high; the principal entrance and the defences for some distance on either side are built of bricks, and on many spots in the interior I observed remains of the same materials. The fort seems to be composed of three sides, the steepness of the hill at its north face precluding the necessity of any other work.”

“Raja Bishmukh’s fort stands about sixteen miles to the north-west of Sadiya, and occupies the high table-land at the foot of the hills between the rivers Dikrang and Dibang. It was visited in the year 1848 by Colonel S. F. Hannay, who thus describes it :—‘A high rampart of earth crossed the opening towards the plain. Crowning this, we found ourselves amongst bricks scattered about, with a low wall running along the top of the outer edge, which on nearer inspection proved to be an upper parapet overtopping the rampart, the lower portion showing a solid facing of hewn sandstone blocks of more or less height according to the nature of the ground. This rampart ran in a direction about north-west, and in the distance of a quarter of a mile which we inspected, the brick wall continued on the left, sometimes to the height of five feet, loop-holed in several places apparently for arrows and spears, but more frequently in a very dilapidated state from huge trees having taken root in the rampart, and wild animals passing over it. At the distance of a quarter of a mile, a spur of the table land touched upon the rampart and a brick wall crossed it, ascending the spur apparently to the level land above. Here also must have been a gateway or passage of some kind through the cross-wall, but all had

*Vol. XLV, Page 510, May 1867

disappeared in the heaps of bricks lying about. The wall and rampart, however, still continued to the north-west; but having little local information about the place, and being limited in our researches to that day only, it was considered advisable to return. We therefore confined our further observations to that portion of the works we had passed."

"The table-land to the east being naturally strong from the steepness and difficulty of ascent, required no artificial defences, and from the circumstance of the rampart and wall abutting upon the southernmost point of the table-land, it appeared to me evident that those works to their utmost extent westward—probably to the banks of the Dibang about four miles distant,—were merely intended to enclose the table-land at the foot of the hills, and thus form a place of refuge in time of invasion. No buildings are said to be on this hill fortification; but the Mishmis (the hill tribe occupying the adjacent heights) who describe it as of great extent, speak also of a gateway by a hill stream, where there are fragments of large earthenware vessels of various shapes, and the truth of this is confirmed by the numerous debris of earthen vessels found in the bed of the Dikrang river, of a description totally different from the manufactures of the present day in Assam, being more (as regards quality of material and shape) like that of the earthenware of Gangetic India."

"Although bearing the appearance of great age, for in many places the wall has bulged and fallen down, it has evidently been well and substantially built; the sandstone blocks, varying from 10 to 8 inches thick, a foot broad, and 20 inches long, are rudely but evenly chiselled with the point, and they are closely and regularly laid. The bricks are first-rate, varying in size from 8×5 to 6×4 inches, and from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, and the parapet wall formed of them about 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet in thickness. The sandstone facing of the rampart may be somewhat less, but the whole masonry work is laid without cement or fastening of any kind; immediately over the sandstone are two rows of bricks, and over these, two others projecting so as to form a rude cornice, which gives it an appearance of neatness. The rows or layers of masonry (sandstone) alternate from 5 to 7 and 9 from the bottom of the wall outside, a difference which may be accounted for either from

the natural steepness of the ground in some parts requiring less wall, or from the earth having accumulated against the wall from natural causes during a long period of time. Close to where the wall abuts against the table-land, there is a turn at right angles, given evidently to form a flank defence."

In 1873, four tanks were discovered in the same locality, one almost as large as the famous tank at Sibsagar, and the brick foundations of what must once have been extensive buildings.

The copper temple, at which the human sacrifices, described in the article on the Chutiyas, took place, stands on the banks of the Dhol river to the east of Sadiya. It is a small stone building with walls $4\frac{1}{2}$ feet thick, and an interior only 8 feet square, which stands in a large enclosure surrounded by a brick wall. The roof was originally sheathed with copper, most of which has now been removed.

There are the ruins of a small temple near the Phulbari village in the Narayanpur mauza. It is approached through a masonry arch, and consists of a small square building about 20 feet high, which is now in a very ruinous condition. Along the front there is a frieze of tiles, and in the neighbouring jungle are to be seen the stone images of several gods. The temple is said to have been erected in the days of Rajeswar Singh, and to have been destroyed by the Mataks. There are also the remains of three small temples near Sisi opposite Dibrugarh, but, like the building at Phulbari, they are in a very ruinous condition. In the valley of the Barpani, about two days journey

from the Harmati garden into the Daffa country, there are the ruins of an old city. Two brick walls, about one mile in length, run parallel to one another at a distance of about a mile apart. The site is covered with jungle and has never been properly explored.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

AHOM KINGS.		A. D.	
A. D.			
1228	Sukapha.	1204	Baktiar Khilji invades Assam.
1268	Sutenpha.	1220	Ghiyasud-din-Bahadur Shah advances to Sadiya but is defeated.
1281	Subinpha.		
1293	Sukangpha.	1256	Iktiyarud-din Yusbak Tughril Khan invades the Brahmaputra Valley but is ultimately defeated.
1332	Sukampha.		
1364	Sutupha-treacherously killed by Chutiyas at a regatta held on the Saffrai river to celebrate a cessation of hostilities between the two tribes.	1337	Muhammed Shah sends a force "of 100,000 horsemen" into Assam, all of whom perish.
1376-1380	Interregnum.		
1380	Sukemthi, a weak and tyrannical prince, assassinated by his ministers.		
1389-1398	Interregnum.		
1398	Sudangpha.		
1407	Siyangpha.		
1423	Suphukpha.		
1439	Susingpha-defeats Nagas.		
1468	Suhangpha-defeated by Kacharis in 1480, and murdered by a convict.		
1468	Supimpha, a cruel prince assassinated by his ministers.		
1467	Suhunmung alias Sarga Narayan or Dihingia Raja. Conquers Chutiyas and annexes their kingdom 1533. Repulses two Muhammadan invasions, the second being that under Turbuk in 1532, who was routed near the Bhareli river. Kills Kachari king and sacks Dimapur his capital in 1536. Assassinated 1539.		
1539	Sukhenmung-built Gargaon (Nasira).		
1553	Sukampha.		
1611	Suchengpha or Pratap Singh. Assists Bali Narayan against Musalmans, besieges Hajo but is driven back. Bar Nadi accepted as frontier between Muhammadans and Ahoms in 1637.	1500-1534	Viswa Singh—Founds Koch kingdom, advances against Ahoms but was apparently defeated.
1640	Surumpha. Deposed.	1534-1584	Nar Narayan-conquers Ahoms and occupies Gargaon circa 1563 A. D. Subdues Rajas of Cachar, Jaintia, Manipur Tipperah and Sylhet. Kala Pahar, invades Assam in 1553 and destroys temples at Kamakhya and Hajo.
1652	Suchingpha. Deposed.	1581-1598	Raghu Rai obtains share of Koch kingdom east of Sankoeb.
1654	Sutumla or Jaiyadwaj Singh. Ahoms occupy Goalpara 1658. Driven back by Mir Jumla who enters Gargaon 1661.	1593-1614	Parikshit-builds North Gauhati, quarrels with his cousin Lakahmi Narayan, calls in Muhammadans to his aid.
1663	Chakradwaj. Ahoms reoccupy Gauhati in 1667.	1614-1637	Bali Narayan—Invokes aid of Ahoms against Muhammadans. From this date the Koch kings cease to be of any political importance

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.—Continued.**AHOM KINGS.**

A. D.	
1670	Adayaditya Singh, assassinated.
1672	Suklumpha-poisoned. Musalmans reoccupy Gauhati.
1674	Suhung-assassinated.
1674	Teenkungiya-assassinated.
1674	Suhungpha-blinded and murdered.
1677	Sudinpha-assassinated.
1679	Sulekpha (Lora Raja) assassinated.
1681	Gadadhar Singh-Ahoms recover possession of Gauhati.
1686	Budra Singh—founds Rangpur, defeats Kachari and Jaintia Rajas, publicly adopts Hinduism as his religion. This period represents the height of the Ahom power. Dies at Gauhati.
1714	Sib Singh—a weak prince who resigned in favour of his wives. Excavated tank at Sibsagar.
1744	Pramatta Singh.
1751	Rajeswar Singh. Decline of Ahom power.
1769	Lakshmi Singh. Out-break of Moamarie rebellion—king deposed for a time, but subsequently reinstated.
1780	Gaurinath Singh. Driven to Gauhati by Moamarie. Reinstated by Captain Welsh in 1791, who is however, recalled in 1794. Krishna Narayan, Darrang Raja, asserts his independence in 1792, but is defeated by Captain Welsh.
1795	Kamaleeswar Singh. Deposes Krishna Narayan.
1809	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese are invited into Assam by Bor Phukan. Deposed 1816.
1816	Purandar Singh—Burmese again enter Assam. Deposed 1818.
1818	Chandra Kanta Singh—Burmese decline to leave—Chandra Kanta driven from Assam in 1820.
1824	War declared between British and Burmese Governments.
1825	Rangpur taken.
1826	Treaty of Yandaboo by which Assam was ceded to the East India Company.

CHAPTER IV. POPULATION.

Area and Density—Towns and Villages—Enormous growth of population—Distribution by subdivisions—Migration—Sex and Marriage—Infirmities—Language—Castes and Tribes—Religions—Mahapurushiyas—Moamarias—Sattras and Gosains—Occupations—Amusements and Festivals—The Bihus—Marriage Customs.

The district covers an area of 4,529* square miles Area and density. within the Inner Line, and, viewed as a whole, is very sparsely peopled, as there were in 1901, only 82 persons to the square mile. There are, however, wide variations from this mean. In the Dibrugarh tahsil†, which covered an area of 265 square miles, there were 314 people to the square mile, and in the Polonga and Chabua mauzas which adjoin it on the east, the density was as much as 377. East of Dibrugarh, along the Sadiya road as far as Saikhoa, a great portion of the land has been planted out with tea or other crops, but in the south, there are wide stretches of forest and waste. The Khowang and Jaipur mauzas, which march with the Sibsagar district, had 84 persons to the square mile, but then come Tippling with 27 and Makum with 38, while east of Makum is the huge Buri Dihing

* Revised figures of area have been received from the Survey Department. They differ from those furnished at the time of the census of 1901.

† The Dibrugarh tahsil was resolved in 1904 into the following mauzas:—Dibrugarh, Lahol, Mankatta, and Konikar, Jamira and Larua.

mauza in which there is hardly any population. North of the Brahmaputra, population is very sparse, and it is only near the subdivisional headquarters station, and the Nakari mauza immediately to the north, that it exceeded 100 to the square mile. In the Dhemaji and Sisi mauzas, west of Dibrugarh, which covered an area of 340 square miles, the average density was only 31. Table III shows the area of each mauza, the density in 1901, and the growth of population in the last intercensal period.

**Towns and
villages.**

Lakhimpur contains one town, Dibrugarh, and 1,123 villages. These villages are not, however, well defined units, clusters of huts which stand out clearly in the centre of fields tilled by their inhabitants. Rice, the staple crop, is grown in wide plains, dotted over with clumps of bamboos and fruit trees in which are buried the houses of the cultivators. It is groves and not villages that the traveller sees, when riding through the more densely populated portions of the district, and not a house can usually be discerned till he has penetrated this jungle of plantains, betelnut trees, and bamboos. There is generally no dearth of building sites, there are no communal lands, and there is nothing to keep the population together. It is difficult to tell where one village ends and another begins, or to which of the larger clumps of trees should be assigned the smaller clumps which are freely dotted about amongst the rice fields. The result is that a village, as defined for census purposes, is a very arbitrary unit, and the statistics showing their size are of little practical importance.

Taking them, however, for what they are worth, it appears that nine tenths of the villages are small hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

The first census of Lakhimpur is said to have been taken in 1847-48, and disclosed a population of 81,917. The methods employed can hardly have been exhaustive, but the accuracy of the enumeration was to some extent confirmed by the census of 1852-53, which gave a total of 85,296 persons.* For twenty years no further attempt was made to count the people, but in 1872, Lakhimpur was included in the general census taken in that year. The enumeration was far from being a synchronous one, the operations extended from November 1871 to the following February, and it is probable that part of the large increase that occurred in the next nine years was due to under estimation in 1872.

Growth of
population
since 1847.

The following table shows the population recorded at the last four enumerations, and the rate of increase in each intercensal period.

	1872.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Population ...	121,267	179,893	254,053	371,396
Percentage of increase ...	...	+ 48	+ 41	+ 46

In marked contrast with most of the other districts of Assam, Lakhimpur is an instance of extraordinary and continuous development. Within 29 years the population more than trebled itself. This enormous increase was mainly due to the importation of large numbers of foreigners, but there was also a satisfactory development amongst the indigenous population. Natu-

* Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Lakhimpur, Appendix A.—Calcutta, 1854.

ral growth is perhaps best measured by the increase in the number of those born and censused in the district, for in the absence of much emigration, and there is comparatively little emigration from Lakhimpur, this standard affords a fair test of the proportion of births and deaths, and of the general fecundity of the area under consideration. Where, however, the proportion of emigrants is large, a considerable number of the babies that are born are the children of mothers who have moved from other places into the district. The increase in those born and censused in Lakhimpur is thus appreciably larger than the increase amongst the indigenous inhabitants. It is difficult to measure this special development with scientific accuracy, as the indigenous inhabitant is a somewhat elusive entity, but the best results are obtained from an examination of the language tables. The following statement shows the percentage of increase that took place during the two last intercensal periods (*a*) amongst those born and censused in the district, and (*b*) amongst the speakers of indigenous languages.*

Percentage of increase amongst those born and censused in district.			Ditto amongst those using indigenous languages.
1881-1891	...	+ 22	+ 9
1891-1901	...	+ 24	+ 16

Regarded from every point of view the growth of population in Lakhimpur is eminently satisfactory. The importation of great quantities of coolies has rendered

* Indigenous languages have been taken to be Assamese, Garo, Bodo, Lalung and Chutiya. Miri has been excluded as there was a considerable influx of Miris from the hills between 1881 and 1901.

it possible to develop the very considerable natural resources of the district. Many of these immigrants have settled down, and have carried out the biblical injunction to replenish the land; but in addition to the growth amongst these settlers, there has been a substantial increase in the indigenous population. This increase is the more acceptable, in that, in the four lower districts of the Assam Valley, there was little or no natural growth amongst the natives of the country between 1872 and 1901.

More than three-fourths of the total population live in the Dibrugarh or sadr subdivision, and the development in this portion of the district has been phenomenally rapid. It contains many extremely prosperous tea gardens, Dibrugarh itself is a thriving little town, and the oil wells, railway, and coal mines afford occupation to a considerable number of labourers and artisans. Within the short space of twenty years the population rose from 126,000 to 287,000, and it is hardly necessary to add that the greater part of this enormous increase was due to immigration. The extent to which this portion of the district has been colonized from other parts of India is illustrated by the fact that in 1901, no less than 47 per cent. of the inhabitants had been born outside the Province; while many of the persons returned as "born in Lakhimpur," must obviously have been of foreign parentage. Although, in places, the population is fairly dense, there are still wide tracts of land available for settlement, and in the subdivision as a whole, there were, in 1901, only 94 persons to the square mile.

Distribution
by sub-
divisions.

North Lakhimpur is not so progressive as the country that lies south of the river. It is generally supposed to be rather unhealthy, its soil is not particularly suitable for tea, communications are defective, and, except that there is an abundance of waste land, the conditions are not such as would normally conduce to a rapid rate of progress. The great advance made during the past 20 years is the more satisfactory, and it must be largely due to natural growth, as in 1901, only 21 per cent. of the people censused in the subdivision had been born outside the Province. The density in that year was only 72 to the square mile, so that there is no fear of the increase of the people being checked by the straitness of their boundaries. The following statement shows the population of each subdivision in 1901, and the percentage of increase at each of the two last enumerations.

		Percentage of increase.	
		1891-1901.	1881-1891.
Dibrugarh	286,572	+50'3	+51'1
North Lakhimpur	84 824	+33'7	+18'0

Migration. 152,856 persons, or 41 per cent. of the population of the district in 1901, had been born in Provinces or States other than Assam. The immense majority of these persons were coolies, and about 72 per cent. of the total came from the neighbouring Province of Bengal. Comparatively few of these people were, however, actually Bengalis, and two-thirds of the immigrants from Bengal came from the division of Chota Nagpur, which supplies Assam with the healthiest but most costly of her labourers. Coolies also came in consider-

able numbers from the Central Provinces, and the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh, and there were over 2,000 from Madras. There were more natives of Rajputana censused in Lakhimpur than in any other district of the Province, these shrewd Marwari merchants reaping a rich harvest from the numerous tea gardens, and from the exploitation of the wholesale trade of this flourishing district. Other immigrants include Punjabi artizans, of whom there were a few hundreds, Kabuli traders from Afghanistan, and Nepalese, of whom there were over 4,000. Many of the latter were serving in the military police battalion, others earn their living as graziers, while others again have settled down to cultivation, sugar-cane being a crop to which they have devoted considerable attention.

As is only natural, Lakhimpur gains largely by inter-district migration, and in 1901, it received 13,552 persons from other districts in the Province, and only gave 3,504 in exchange. Most of the immigrants came from Sibsagar and Kamrup, almost all the latter being persons who had come up to work on tea gardens. Two-thirds of the emigrants went to the neighbouring district of Sibsagar. Further details with regard to immigration will be found in Table V.

The deficiency of women has always been very marked in Lakhimpur. At the last three enumerations, the proportion has been lower here than in any other district of the Province, and in 1872, the Cachar Plains was the only area which had a lower record. Between 1881 and 1901, the gross ratio slowly declined from 867 to 862

Sex.

for every 1,000 males, but this extremely low rate is no doubt partly due to the disturbing effect of immigration. Of the 13,500 persons received from other districts of Assam, no less than 10,000 were males, and the male element is always predominant amongst immigrants from outside the Province. The effect of immigration can, however, be eliminated by calculating the proportion on those born and censused in the district. Even when this is done, there is still a great deficiency of women, the proportion to a 1,000 males at the last three enumerations being,—1881, 957, 1891, 939, and 1901, 951. But the last named figure, after all, was higher than that reported from Sibsagar. The causes which regulate the proportions between the sexes are obscure, but it seems to be the general rule that women in the plains of Assam should be in a minority. Districts like Kamrup and Nowgong, where public health has been particularly bad, and where women have displayed a greater resistant capacity to these unfavourable conditions than the so-called stronger sex, form an exception to this rule.

Marriage.

It is satisfactory to know that the deficiency of women is not due to the prevalence of early marriage. The following abstract shows the percentage of Hindu girls under ten, and between ten and fifteen, who have performed the marriage ceremony, and the proportion between fifteen and twenty, who, even according to western ideas, would be considered *aptae viro*, who are still unwed. For the purposes of comparison, the figures for Goalpara have been included, as unfortunately in that district, the idea has gradually gained ground that

social advancement can in some way be obtained by subjecting an immature child to the responsibilities of matrimony.

Married and Widowed.		Percentage of Hindu Girls.	
Age.		Age.	
0—10		10—15	
Lakhimpur	... 0·8		12·6
Goalpara	... 4·8		62·4
Percentage of Hindu Girls unmarried.			
Age.			
15—20			
Lakhimpur	... 44·7		
Goalpara	... 7·2		

For every child-wife or widow under ten in Lakhimpur, there are six in Goalpara, and between ten and fifteen the proportion in the two districts is as five to one. The proportion of women of child-bearing age to the total population is obviously a factor which has much to do with its development. In this respect, Lakhimpur has some advantage, as 165 per mille of the inhabitants are married women between 15 and 40, as compared with 157 per mille in the Province as a whole.

Lakhimpur is fairly free from three out of the four special infirmities selected for record at the census. The proportion of insane persons is very low, while the number of deaf mutes, though 50 per cent. higher than the ratio for the Indian Empire, does not exceed the average for the Province. The proportion of the blind is distinctly below the Provincial and Imperial averages. This comparative immunity from some of the more serious ills of the flesh is largely due to the strength of the immigrant population, as the deaf and

dumb, the blind, and the insane are obviously not likely to leave their homes to seek their fortunes in a foreign country. The proportion of lepers is below the provincial average, but is double that prevailing in the Indian Empire. The following abstract shows, out of 10,000 males, the number afflicted with these four infirmities in 1901. The figures for males only have been given, as concealment is more likely to occur in the case of women, and in their case the figures for leprosy are probably incorrect.

Number of afflicted out of 10,000 Males.

			Lakhimpur.	Assam.	India.
Insane	...	...	1	5	3
Deafmute	...	...	9	9	6
Blind	...	...	7	10	12
Lepers	...	...	10	13	5

Language. The extent to which Lakhimpur has been denationalized, and the way in which the indigenous inhabitants have been swamped by hordes of immigrants, can be judged from the fact that Assamese was only returned by 39 per cent. of the population in 1901, as their customary form of speech. Six per cent. spoke Miri, and one per cent. Bodo or plains Kachari, but no less than 53 per cent. returned languages foreign to the Province. Twenty-one per cent. professed to speak Bengali, but it is doubtful whether, to an Assamese, Bengali means anything more than a foreign tongue, and this term probably included many forms of speech which would have been by no means understood of the people of Nadia. Fourteen per cent. returned Hindi, 6 per cent. Munda, and 2 per cent. Santali. Assamese is described by

Mr. Grierson as the sister not the daughter of Bengali.* It comes from Bihar through northern Bengal and not from Bengal proper, the plural and the feminine gender are formed in a different way from that in use in Bengali, and there is a considerable difference in the conjugation of the verb, in the idiom, the syntax and even in the vocabulary. The pronunciation is also different, the Bengali sh. being converted into h by the Assamese, and ch into s. Miri is classified as a Thibeto-Burman language and is said to be closely akin to Dafla, which is spoken in the hills a little to the west. The foreign languages need hardly be described in a gazetteer of Lakhimpur.

It has already been shewn by the tests of language Caste and tribes. and birth place that Lakhimpur is ethnically ceasing to be a portion of Assam, and that the indigenous inhabitants are gradually sinking into a position of marked numerical inferiority. More than half the total population of the district belong to foreign castes, the ones most strongly represented being the Mundas, Santals, Bhuiyas, Bhumijs, and Oraons. The history of these people and their customs will be found in Mr. Risley's Tribes and Castes of Bengal. The castes of the United Provinces are described in the admirable work by Mr. Crooke, so that any reference to these foreigners would hardly be in place in the present work. Table V gives details by sex and subdivisions of all castes which had more than 5,000 representatives in the district in 1901, and, in the following pages, some account is

* Report on census of India 1901, vol. I, p. 324.

given of those of them which are peculiar to Assam. As is only to be expected from the history of the district, the Ahoms form a large proportion, nearly one third, of the indigenous inhabitants. The Chutiyas are fairly numerous, though the bulk of the caste are living in Sibsagar, and Miris, Kacharis, and Doms or Nadiyals are found in considerable numbers. Kalitas and Kewats on the other hand, the typical castes of lower Assam, are comparatively scarce, and Brahmans and Kayasthas are naturally not numerous. The European population is considerable, and, in 1901, consisted of 350 males and 119 females; a community considerably larger than that in any of the indigo districts in the Patna division, with the exception of Patna itself. Nearly all the Europeans were living in the sadr subdivision.

Ahoms.
Males 29,703
Females 29,347

The Ahoms are the descendents of the Shan tribe who entered Assam in the thirteenth century, and gradually extended their sway over the whole of the Brahmaputra Valley. They are divided into three sections, the Chamuas or gentry, the Kheluas or functional sections, and the Meluas or servants of the royal family. These sections are not endogamous, though there is a natural tendency for men to take wives from families in their own rank of life, and inter-marriage between certain families such as the Handikoi and the Pakimara is prohibited, for reasons which are not very clear. The Ahoms still possess a sturdier physique than the ordinary Assamese, and the Muhammadan chronicler of Mir Jumla's invasion describes them as "strong, quarrelsome, and bold." The complexion is fair, the cheek bones high,

and the face unusually broad. Practically all the Ahoms are now, in name at any rate, Hindus, but their new religion sits lightly on them, and the lower orders still bury their dead. As amongst the other humbler Assamese castes, cohabitation often takes place after a feast has been given to the villagers, and there is nothing in the nature of a religious ceremony. The more respectable form is the *chaklong*, which consists in the interchange of the *temi* and *katari*, the box in which betel nut is carried and the knife with which it is cut, the tying of the nuptial knot, and a feast to the friends and relations. A hole is then cut in the corner of the house through which the bride is removed.

A woman once married by the "*chaklong*" ceremony cannot be re-married by the same rite, though she can take a second husband by the simpler form of marriage which is known as *gur pithaguri*. Divorce is recognised, and the parties can marry again. Agriculture is the staple occupation of the caste. Their social position is a somewhat peculiar one. The fact that, prior to our occupation of the country, they were the ruling race, obtains for them a considerable measure of respect; but the recency of their conversion to Hinduism necessitates a very low place in the Brahmanical order, and Brahmans will not, as a rule, take water from their hands.

In the days of native rule, Lakhimpur was too remote and wild a tract to have many attractions for the priestly caste, and the majority of the Brahmans have migrated to the district in comparatively recent times. The

Brahmans
Males 3,794
Females 1,014

marked disproportion between the sexes clearly shows that many of this caste are foreigners.

Chutiyas
Males 9,318
Females 8,330

The Chutiyas, like the Koch and Ahoms, are one of the race castes of Assam. The caste is divided into four subdivisions, Hindu, Ahom, Deori, and Borahi. The latter, as their name implies, are still unconverted and eat pork, but the number of Borahi Chutiyas is very small. The Deori Chutiya are the old priestly caste, and are described as follows in the census report of 1901:—

“Their original home was on the banks of the Kundil river east of Sadiya, but when the Ahom power began to decline, they were harried by the hill tribes in the neighbourhood, and at the beginning of the century they migrated to North Lakhimpur, and from there moved to the Majuli, the Dikrang river, Sissi Mukh, and the Baligao mauza in Jorhat. The Mongolian type is much more strongly marked in them than in the ordinary Chutiya, and they might easily be mistaken for Miris. They keep pigs and fowls, but their most distinguishing characteristic is the enormous size of the houses in which they dwell. These houses are built on *changs*, and are enlarged from time to time to make room for the increasing size of the family. There are frequently as many as sixty persons living in one long barrack, and the Chutiyas themselves say, that there are sometimes double this number living under one roof. The Deori Chutiyas on the Majuli profess to be Hindus, but beef is the only article of food from which they abstain, and it is said that all that they could remember of the instructions of their Gosain was that were to pray to God, and keep their instructions secret; and it was possibly with the idea of avoiding any risk of indiscretion that they had so carefully forgotten all that they had been told. Their temples are copies in wood and thatch of the famous copper temple at Sadiya, which was at one time a centre of worship for all the hill tribes on the north-east frontier, but has long been in ruins. These models are small buildings about eight feet square raised on high bamboos, and not unlike pigeon houses in appearance, standing in enclosures, into which no one but the temple officials are allowed to enter. In the principal village on the Majuli, a copper roof is being placed on the model to render the resemblance more complete. Mr. Brown, who was at one time Assistant Commis-

sioner in North Lakhimpur, reports that the Deoris attach great importance to their own religion, but that a knowledge of its mysteries is apparently confined to the priests and the older men. There are four priests attached to each khel, the Bor and Saru Deori and the Bor and Saru Bharali. The two Deoris alone are entitled to enter the temple, and the Bharalis, as their name implies, are mainly concerned with the temporalities of the goddess. The chief gods are three—Gerasi Geri (Assamese "Buraburi") worshipped by the Debongi khel; Pishadema (Assamese "Boliya hemata," the elder son, worshipped by the Tengapaniya khel; and Pesbasi (the daughter), who is also known as Tameshari Mai (the mother of the copper temple), and Kechakhati (the eater of raw flesh). The latter name is given in memory of the annual human sacrifice which in former times used to be offered to the goddess, the victim being provided by the Ahom Raja. This abomination was discontinued during the reign of Gaurinath Singh, and according to the Deoris the down fall of the Ahoms was largely due to their neglect of this religious rite.

The following interesting account of the human sacrifices offered near Sadiya is extracted from a note left by Lieutenant Dalton in the library of the Now-gong office :—

The chief and oldest of the shrines was the Tamar Ghar, or copper temple, which still exists in ruins and was lately visited by Captain Vetch. It is described as a small stone building nearly square, built without cement, the stones joined by iron pins not clamped. The roof was of copper, but it has fallen in, and now lies there. The interior is eight feet square. The whole is enclosed within a brick wall 130 feet by 200. Near the grand entrance in the western wall is a small stone tripod. Here human sacrifices were yearly offered till a very recent date, but latterly the Ahom kings gave for the purpose malefactors who had been sentenced to capital punishment. Suitable victims of this description were not, however, always to be obtained, and then a particular khel or tribe of the king's subjects was bound to provide one, for which they had certain privileges and immunities accorded them, such as being exempted from the payment of ferry and market duties; and were thence called *Sarh*, or free. For it was necessary that, the victims to be immolated, should be of pure caste and perfect form; the slightest blemish or mutilation, even the boring of an ear, rendering them unfit to be offered to

The human
sacrifices
of the
Chutiyas.

the Gosaini or goddess. Brahmans and members of the royal family were exempted as a privilege ; Doms, Haris, Musalmans, and women were excluded as unfit. For some time preceding the sacrifice, the victim to be immolated was detained at the temple, where he fared sumptuously, till in sufficiently plump condition to suit the supposed taste of the Gosaini. On the day appointed he was led forth magnificently attired, and decorated with gold and silver ornaments, to be shown to the multitude that assembled on the occasion ; then withdrawn, and led by a private path trodden only by the officiating priests and their victim to the brink of a deep pit, where he was divested of his fineries and decapitated, so that the body fell into the pit. The head was added to a heap of ghastly skulls that were piled in view of the shrine. These sacrifices appear to have continued till the subversion of the Ahom Government by the Burmese, when the Deoris abandoned their ancient possessions in the vicinity of the copper temple, to the fearful rites of which they had for upwards of six centuries administered, with the slaughter by their own account of some six hundred human victims."

The Ahom Chutiyas have for some generations been converts to Hinduism, but in the social scale they rank below the Hindu Chutiya, and their presence in a house is said to debar a Brahman from drinking water there. The Ahoms and Hindu Chutiyas can smoke, but cannot eat together, and, in theory, cannot intermarry. A member of the Ahom section can, however, obtain a Hindu Chutiya girl, if he is willing to pay a slightly higher price for her, but the bride sinks to the status of her husband. Hindu Chutiyas are sometimes united by the *hompura* ceremony, while the *chaklong* rite, which is the Ahom form of marriage, is in vogue amongst the Ahom Chutiyas. The Chutiyas are, however, far from strict in their views on matrimonial matters, and one native gentleman reports that 50 per cent. of the so called married couples have performed no ceremony at all, and that a girl sometimes changes her

husband nine or ten times. The social position of the caste is low, and almost all of them are petty cultivators. They burn their dead and perform the *sradh* ceremony at the expiry of a month. Brahmans of inferior social standing act as their priests.

The Kacharis or Bara, (mispronounced Bodo) as they call themselves, belong to the great Bodo tribe, which is found, not only in the Brahmaputra Valley, but in the Garo Hills, and in Hill Tippera south of the Surma Valley. It is generally supposed that they are a section of the Indo-Chinese race, whose original habitat was somewhere between the upper waters of the Yangtse-kiang and the Hoang ho, and that they gradually spread in successive waves of immigration over the greater part of what is now the Province of Assam. A prayer, which is still in use amongst the Dimasa* in the North Cachar Hills, lends some support to this view. It refers to a huge peepul tree growing near the confluence of the Dilao (Brahmaputra) and the Sagi. There the Kacharis were born and increased greatly in numbers, and thence they travelled by land and water till they reached Nilachal, the hill near Gauhati, on which the temple of Kamakhya stands. From Gauhati they migrated to Halali, and finally settled in Dimapur. The inscriptions recorded on copper plates in the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D. refer to the conquest of Kamarupa by a foreign dynasty, which was subsequently replaced by a king of the line of Narak.†

Kacharis
Males 13,711
Female 11,152

* The Dimasa are the Kacharis of North Cachar whose capital was originally at Dimapur.

† Vide J. A. S. B. Vol. LXVII Part I No. I, 1898 page 99.

It is possible that these invaders were Kacharis, and it would be natural enough for them to retreat towards the Dhansiri valley, on their expulsion from Gauhati.

The Kachari kingdom was one of the strongest powers with which the Ahoms were confronted when they entered the valley of the Brahmaputra. Their capital was located at Dimapur on the Dhansiri river, and at one time they were in possession of the western part of Sibsagar, and the greater part of the Nowgong district. Dimapur was sacked by the Ahoms in 1536, and the Kachari king was compelled to move his capital to Maibang. Subsequently they migrated to the plains of Cachar, and the last representative of the royal line was assassinated there in 1830. It seems, however, doubtful whether the Kacharis who live on the north bank of the Brahmaputra were ever in any way connected with the king of Dimapur. The one tribe style themselves Bara, the other Dimasa, and though both use languages of Bodo origin, the difference between plains Kachari and Dimasa is greater than that between French and Spanish. The two tribes sprang, no doubt, from the same stock, but there is no evidence to show that they were ever united by the tie of a common nationality, or that the Kacharis of Darrang were more closely connected with the Kacharis of North Cachar, than are the Rabhas or Garos.

The following legend is prevalent amongst the Dimasa of North Cachar. It would account for the separation of the Bodo and Dimasa, but no traces of the story have been found amongst the Kacharis of Darrang. Long ago

the Dimasa fought against a powerful tribe and were beaten in a pitched battle. They were compelled to give ground, but after a time, further retreat was barred by a wide and deep river. In despair, the king resolved to fight again on the following day, but in the night a god appeared to him, and told him that the next morning the army could cross the river if they entered it at a spot where they saw a heron standing on the bank. No one, however, was to look back while the movement was in progress. The dream proved true. A heron was seen standing on the bank, and the king and a great portion of his people crossed in safety. A man then turned to see whether his son was following, when the waters suddenly rose and swept away those who were in the river bed, and prevented the others from crossing. The Dimasa were those who succeeded in reaching the further bank in safety.

In Central and Lower Assam the great bulk of the Kacharis have remained faithful to their tribal form of worship, and on conversion, are received into the ranks of the Koch. This is not the case in Lakhimpur, where nearly all the Kacharis are, in name at any rate, Hindus, and live like other humble Hindu castes. Most of them are settled in the centre of the district not far from Dibrugarh.

The following description of the Kalitas is reproduced from the Report on the Census of 1901.

Kalita.
Males 3,310
Females 2,102

"There is much uncertainty as to the origin of this caste. The popular explanation is, that Kalitas are Kshatriyas, who fleeing from the wrath of Parasu Ram, concealed their caste and their persons in the jungles of Assam, and were thus called

Kul-lupta. Other theories are that they are Kayasthas degraded for having taken to cultivation, an explanation which in itself seems somewhat improbable, and is not supported, as far as I am aware, by any evidence; or that they are the old priestly caste of the Bodo tribe. The latter theory can hardly be said to account for their origin, and though it is possible that Kalitas may have originally acted as priests, this fact throws little or no light on the problem of what the Kalitas are. The most plausible suggestion is, that they are the remains of an Aryan colony, who settled in Assam, at a time when the functional castes were still unknown in Bengal, and that the word "Kalita" was originally applied to all Aryans who were not Brahmans.

The Kalitas are divided into two main sub-divisions, Bar and Saru, and into a number of professional subcastes. In Upper Assam Bar Kalitas are said to decline to use the plough, though they occasionally work with the spade, but there is no such restriction in Kamrup, where the great bulk of the caste is found. Cultivation is, in fact, the traditional occupation of the caste, and they even consent to work as coolies on tea gardens. The usual procedure for a Kalita who has succeeded in rising above the necessity for manual labour, and is no longer compelled to follow the plough, is to call himself a Kaist or Kayastha. Two explanations are given of the origin of the Saru Kalita—one, that he is the offspring of persons who for three generations back have not been united by the "*hom*" ceremony, the other that he is the child of a Bar Kalita and a Kewat woman. Whether the Bar Kalita can inter-marry with, and eat *kachchi* with the Saru Kalita seems open to question, and the practice apparently varies in different districts; but there seems to be no doubt that the functional sub-divisions of the caste are debarred from the privilege of close intercourse with the Bar Kalita. These sub-divisions are the Mali, Sonari, Kamar, Kumhar, Napit, Nat, Suri, and Dhoba. The first two inter-marry with the Saru Kalita, and also with the Kamar Kalita. The last four groups are endogamous. All these functional groups are to some extent looked down upon, probably because followers of these professions, who were not true Kalitas, have occasionally succeeded in obtaining admission within their rank; but the goldsmiths, from their wealth, have secured a good position in society. Kalitas have a good Brahman for their priest, and their water is taken by every caste; a fact which no doubt explains the high value attached to Kalita slaves in the time of the Assam Rajas, when two Koches could be purchased for the price of a single Kalita, though the Koch is generally the hardier and stronger man of the two.

Early marriage is common in Goalpara, but not in Assam proper, except amongst the upper sections of the caste. They take, in fact, a liberal view of the relations between the sexes, and cohabitation is the essential part of marriage. Well-to-do Kalitas are invariably united by the *hompura* rite and employ a Brahman. The poorer people often content themselves with the *agchauldia* or *juron* ceremonies, which consist of a feast to the villagers and a public acknowledgment of the position of the bride. Some authorities hold that this, though a valid form of marriage for the lower Assamese castes, is not sufficient for the Kalita. They regard the *hompura* rite as the one essential ceremony of purification. But it can be performed after cohabitation has begun, and sometimes takes place after the death of the husband. An unmarried girl, who becomes pregnant, does not forfeit her position in the society, unless her lover is of lower caste

Many of the Kayasthas are foreigners, and most of them earn their living by clerical work of one sort or another. Kalitas, who have risen above the necessity of manual labour, frequently describe themselves as Kayasthas.

The Kewats are a respectable Hindu caste, from whose hands Brahmans will take water, and who according to Assamese ideas rank immediately after the Kalita. These remarks only hold good, however, of the Halwa or cultivating Kewats. The Jaliya or

Kayastha.
Males 1,046
Females 696

Kewats
Males 2,566
Females 2,495

fishing subdivision of the caste occupy a very humble position in the social scale, and are considered little better than Nadiyals. The two sections of the caste have nothing whatever in common, except the name Kewat or Kaibartta, but the number of Jaliya Kewats is comparatively small. The ordinary occupation of the caste is agriculture, but a few of them have succeeded in reaching that desirable position in which the pen takes the place of the ploughshare as a means of livelihood. A respectable Brahman acts as their priest.

Miris.
Males 12,280
Females 12,631

The Miris, or as they style themselves, Mishing, were originally settled in the hills to the north of Lakhimpur between the Dafla and the Abor territory. They are thought to be members of the Thibeto-Burman family, and the Chutiya Miris claim kinship with the Chutiya. According to their own account, they descended from the hills with the Chutiyas, when first they conquered Lakhimpur, and retired again with them into their mountain fastnesses, when they were finally defeated by the Ahoms in the sixteenth century. On the advent of the British, the Miris again began to settle in the plains, a process which has been in steady progress ever since. Their countenances are of a distinctly Mongolian type, but their appearance is by no means unpleasing. They are strongly built, with finely developed limbs, and their complexions often have a distinctly ruddy hue. They are cleaner in their persons than many of the Tibeto-Burman tribes, and the more civilized amongst them

fully appreciate the advantages of the bath. The Miris are divided into two main endogamous septs, the Barogams and the Dorgams, which are again subdivided into a large number of minor groups. The Chutiya Miris give the names of these groups as the Chutiya and Doityal who intermarry, the Samaguriya who are endogamous, and the Saiengia, Aiengia, Moengia, Dombugiyal and Lassongoniya who intermarry with one another. These names are said to be derived from the different duars through which the different clans descended from the hills, and it is doubtful whether they correspond to any distinctions of genuine importance. In the plains, the Miris always live near running water. Their dwellings are built on piles, and are sometimes as much as forty yards in length, and contain from twenty to thirty inmates. Pigs and fowls scratch about beneath the houses, which are usually built in two long rows, and differ from those of the Assamese in having no fruit trees or gardens round them. They support themselves by agriculture, and raise crops of summer rice, mustard, millet, pulse, and sweet potatoes. Though more than half the Miris of Lakhimpur describe themselves as Hindus, they have liberal notions with regard to diet, and eat pork and drink rice beer. Buffalo flesh is not eaten by the Chutiya Miris. Their marriages are somewhat costly affairs, and entail a considerable expenditure upon food, which is borne by the families of the contracting parties. Sexual intercourse before marriage is not regarded with much disfavour, but, if the bride is unable to swear to her

virginity, she has to content herself with a comparatively quiet wedding. Traces of polyandry are to be found in the fact that adultery with a member of the husband's family is considered less heinous than if the offence is committed outside the clan. The general rule for adultery in the plains is that the corespondent should pay twice the cost of the wedding ceremony, after which he is allowed to take his mistress openly to his own house. A similar practice is reported from the hills, but, if the gay Lothario is unable to make the necessary reparation, the guilty couple are tied face to face, pierced with a bamboo stake, and thrown into the river. The bodies of these unfortunate lovers are not unfrequently brought down by the Subansiri, when the river rises in the rains. The dead are usually buried, and the funeral ceremonies include a substantial feast. The Miri religion is of the ordinary animistic type. It's principal feature is the propitiation of malignant spirits likely to do harm. They believe in the immortality of the soul, but do not attempt to dogmatise on the subject, and are somewhat impressed by the fact that the dead never return to this world.

The Nadiyals
Males 9,751
Females 6,165

The Doms, or, as they prefer to call themselves, Nadiyals, are the boating and fishing caste of Assam. They are anxious to assume the name Jaliya Kaibartta, but the Kaibarttas are unquestionably a different caste, though their manners and customs do not differ materially from those of the Assamese Nadiyals, except in the following particular. The Kaibarttas decline to use the *ghokata* net, and in theory only sell

their fish on the river's bank, within a paddle's throw of the boat, whereas the Nadiyals regularly take their catch to market. The Nadiyals are probably decended from the aboriginal race of Doms, the ruins of whose forts are still to be seen in India, but migrated to Assam before the Dom caste had been assigned the degrading functions now performed by them in Bengal. They are cleanly in their persons, and particular in their observance of the dictates of the Hindu religion, and account for the objectionable expression "Dom," which undoubtedly they have borne for centuries, by saying, that they were the last of the Assamese to be converted from Buddhism. They are darker in complexion than most of the Assamese, but have a good physique, and by no means uncomely faces. Their women are most prolific, and the Dom villages are full of fat brown babies. They rank very low in the social scale, and, according to Assamese ideas, are superior only to the Brittil Baniya or Hari. The bulk of the caste still live by fishing, and education has made but little progress among them. Marriage does not take place till the girl is fully grown, and they are free from any puritanical notions with regard to the relations between the sexes. Their priests are said to be decended from a Brahman father and a Nadiyal mother, but for all practical purposes they are Nadiyals and intermarry with Nadiyal girls.

The Koches are one of the race castes of Assam. The Koch.
Originally they were an aboriginal tribe, apparently Males 4,329
of Mongolian origin, which, at the beginning of the Females 3,335

sixteenth century, rose to power under their great leader Viswa Singh. His son, Nar Narayan, extended his conquests as far as Upper Assam, Tippera, and Manipur; and by the middle of the sixteenth century, the Koch king had attained to a position of such power, that the aboriginal people were anxious to be enrolled as members of his tribe. The result is that at the present day the name is no longer that of a tribe but of a caste, to which, in Lower Assam, new converts to Hinduism are admitted. In Sibsagar and Lakhimpur, these converts still retain their tribal names, and the Koch is a respectable Sudra caste, which is not broken up into various subdivisions. This is not the case in Lower Assam, and the different groups are there allotted a different status, which is dependent on the time that has elapsed since conversion took place, and the extent to which aboriginal habits have been shaken off.

Religion.

Classified by religion, the population of Lakhimpur was distributed in the following proportions in 1901.—Hinduism 90 per cent., Animism 5 per cent. and Muhammadanism 3 per cent. The three principal sects of Hinduism recorded at the census of 1901, were Saktism, Sivaitism, and Vaishnavism.

**Hindus-
Saktists.**

Thirty-four per cent. of the Hindus who returned their sect in 1901, described themselves as followers of Sakti, or worshippers of the reproductive powers as manifested in the female. More than half of these Saktists were, however, censused on the tea plantations, and a considerable number of those living in the villages were probably ex-garden coolies. The great

majority of these persons were no doubt so styled, because they ate meat and drank liquor, though this in a garden coolie is not so much an indication of his adherence to the goddess Kali, as of the uncertainty of his title to the name of Hindu at all. Saktism is a foreign growth in Assam, and Vaishnavism is the national form of Hinduism.

Sivaitism is the counterpart of Saktism, and is concerned with the worship of the procreative energy as manifested in the male. In 1901, 9,079 persons in Lakhimpur professed this special form of Hinduism, a large proportion of whom were found in North Lakhimpur. It is, however, doubtful whether the distinction between the worshippers of Siva and Sakti was very clearly understood. Sivaitism.

A considerable number of Hindus did not attempt to specify their sect in 1901, but, of those who committed themselves to this extent, nearly 62 per cent. declared their adherence to Vaishnavism. The following description of the development of Vaishnavism in Assam is extracted from the Report on the Census of 1901. Vaishnavism

"Sanker Deb, the apostle of Vaishnavism in Assam, was born in 1449 A. D., and was the descendant of a Kayastha who, according to tradition, had been sent, with six of his caste fellows and seven Brahmans, to Assam by the king of Kanaijpur as a substitute for the Assamese prime minister, who had fled to his court for refuge. The licentious rites of Saktism had aroused his aversion while he was still a boy, and his desire to found a purer system of religion was increased by the teachings of Chaitanya in Bengal. Like most reformers, he met with vehement opposition from the supporters of the established order and he was compelled to leave his home in Nowgong and to fly to the inhospitable jungles of the Barpeta subdivision. Here in conjunction with

his disciple, Madhab Deb, he founded the Mahapurushiya sect, the main tenets of which are the prohibition of idolatry and sacrifice, disregard of caste, and the worship of God by hymns and prayers only. Sanker himself was, like a true follower of Chaitanya, a vegetarian, but the low-caste people who formed a larger proportion of his converts, found his injunctions a counsel of perfection. The Mahapurushiyas are accordingly allowed to eat the flesh of game, but not of domesticated animals, though, with a subtlety only too common in this country, they observe the letter of the law, prohibiting the spilling of blood, by beating their victims to death. The great centre of the Mahapurushiya's faith is the *sattr*a at Barpeta, where a larger number of persons persist in living, huddled together, in defiance of all the laws of sanitation, and resist with surprising pertinacity all efforts to improve their condition. They are a peculiarly bigoted people, and are strongly opposed to vaccination ; with the result that the mortality from small pox in the neighbourhood of the *sattr*a is exceptionally high. It was not long, however, before the Brahmans reasserted their influence ; and shortly after Sanker's death, two of his followers, who were members of this caste, established sects, called, after their founders, Damodariya and Hari Deb Panthiya, which are distinguished from the Mahapurushiyas, by the respect paid to the distinctions of caste, and a certain tolerance of idolatry. A fourth sect was founded by one Gopal Deb, but it originally seems to have differed in no way from the Mahapurushiya creed, and subsequently its followers adopted the teachings of Deb Damodar. There is in fact, practically no distinction between the Damodariyas, the Hari Deb Panthiyas, and the Gopal Deb Panthiyas, and the Vaishnavites of the Assam Valley can be divided into the Mahapurushia and Bamunia or "other Vaishnavas," as they have been called in the census tables. The former will accept a Sudra as a religious guide, worship no God but Krishna, and are uncompromising in their hostility to idols ; the latter will only recognise Brahmans as their gosains, permit the adoration of other deities, such as Siva and Kali, in addition to that of Krishna, and allow sacrifices to be offered in their honour."

The Bamunias are also more liberal in their diet, and will eat goats, pigeons, and ducks, a form of food that is not allowed to orthodox Vaishnavites in Bengal. Madhab Deb, like most religious reformers, was a strict disciplinarian. The story goes, that the breach between

him and Gopal Deb arose one stormy day, when, the party were returning to Barpeta by boat. Gopal Deb, anxious for the safety of his teacher, apostrophised the storm clouds passing overhead, and begged them to restrain their fury till Madhab had reached the shore in safety. This innocent remark was construed into an invocation of Varuna, the god of rain. Gopal Deb was denounced as an idolater, and was incontinently, by order of Madhab, flung out of the boat. Such treatment was enough to damp the enthusiasm of the most ardent disciple. Gopal Deb, wallowing in the water, gallantly shouted out defiance to his former leader, and warned him that in future he would be treated with uncompromising opposition.

The Moamaras are a section of the Vaishnavas who for many years have borne a distinct and separate name, though the doctrines to which they pin their faith do not, according to their own accounts, differ in any way from those originally taught by Sankar Deb. The founder of the first Moamaria *sattr*a was Aniruddha, a disciple of Gopal Deb. One of the names by which his followers are called, *Purana Bhokot*, is said to have been given to them in consequence of an incident which occurred when Aniruddha paid his first visit to his spiritual teacher. Gopal Deb seems to have been aware that twelve holy men were coming to enrol themselves as his disciples, and determined to test the extent to which they had renounced the comforts of this world. He accordingly gave orders to have a new path cleared to the *sattr*a, and left the old one under jungle. Aniruddha

The
Moamaras.

was the only one of the twelve who deliberately chose the old and harder path, and this trifling act of mortification is still commemorated even at the present day.

The first *sattrā* was established by Aniruddha in 1615 A. D., at the Balikuchi village in the Narayanpur mauza of North Lakhimpur; but as it was too close to the villages of Daffas and other low caste people, it was removed by the gosain to the Nahorati village on the north bank of the Luhit. From there it was again moved, first to Kutiaputi in Jorhat, then back to the Majuli, then back again to Jorhat to the Barbheti in the Maloa Pathar, and finally in 1816 A. D. to the banks of the Dinjan near Chabua in Lakhimpur. At the present day, the Moamarias or Matakas are cut off from communion with the other Vaishnavas of Assam. Men of all castes are members of this sect, but a matak Kalita, Brahman, or Ahom cannot intermarry or eat with other Kalitas, Brahmans, or Ahoms; and the Matak members of each caste form an endogamous section in it. Their rigorous exclusion from bed and board by their caste fellows dates from the time of the Moamaria insurrection, for which their gosain was considered to have been principally to blame. Raghu, one of the leaders of this rebellion, seems to have compelled many of the principal Vaishnavite mohunts to become disciples of the Matak gosain, and this was an insult which they were quite unable to forgive. The horrors of that civil war were such that it is only natural that the memory of it should survive, and the Moamarias are still regarded with disfavour by other Assamese Hindus.

The Matakas are said to be extremely loyal to their gosain, and declare that the name itself is derived from *ekmat*, a title given them in recognition of their prompt obedience. The following story is told in illustration of their independence. One of the Ahom Rajas had heard that the Matakas would never bow their heads, and determined to put their stubbornness to the test. A sharp sword was fastened across a road at the height at which it would meet the neck of a mounted man, and a Matak was then ordered to gallop along the road. The foolish man declined to bend his head to avoid the sword, and as a natural consequence it was lopped clean off from his shoulders.

Apart from the Moamarias most of the Vaishnavites in Lakhimpur are disciples of the gosains residing on the Majuli. A full account of these gosains and their surroundings will be found in the Gazetteer of the Sibsagar district. The influence of these priests is very great, and they are possessed of considerable pecuniary resources, as every disciple sends a yearly offering varying from a few annas to five or six rupees. Offerings are also made in kind, especially by villagers who live in the vicinity of the *sattras*, and consist of rice, paddy, home made cloths, molasses, plantains, and the other products of their farms and gardens. The *sattras* store houses are thus always full of all the material comforts valued by the Assamese. In every community which includes a considerable number of his disciples, the gosain has a *medhi* or agent, who sometimes occupies as high a position in the social economy of the

Gosains.

village as the *gaobura* or village elder appointed by the Government.

At certain seasons of the year, the gosains go on tour through the villages and are visited by their followers. These progresses are generally attended with considerable pomp and dignity. If the journey is made during the rainy season, the gosain and his followers travel in state barges, whose curved prows and slender lines distinguish them from the ordinary rough built country boat. Most of the *sattras* own one or more fine elephants, and these ponderous animals take a leading part in the procession that escorts the spiritual leader of the people. The gosain himself is carried in a litter, drums are beaten and cymbals clashed before him, and when he alights he is not permitted to touch the ground with his bare feet. It is not always that the influence of the priest is used for good. Bigotry and intolerance, and dislike to change or progress in any form, are often found in those who profess to be the ministers of God, but from reproaches of this kind the Vaishnava gosains of Upper Assam are entirely free. Dignified but courteous in their demeanour, they have ever been noted for their loyalty to Government, and their influence is altogether beneficial in encouraging purity of life, and obedience to the authorities.

Sattras.

There are only three *sattras* in Lakhimpur itself. The principal Moamaria *sattra* is situated near Chabua on the Dinjan stream, and is wanting in the dignity attaching to similar institutions in Sibsagar. The Namghor is not much larger than that found in any

ordinary prosperous village, there are no lines occupied by resident *bhokots*, and a traveller might easily pass by the place without realizing that he was in the neighbourhood of one of these religious houses. The gosain enjoys a grant of 2,502 bighas of land, held at half the ordinary rates of land revenue, and possesses some six or seven elephants. Worship is carried on by thirty or forty *bhokots* who live in the neighbourhood of the Namghor. The building itself consists of a huge hall, whose roof is supported on massive wooden pillars. At the further end is a *singhasun*, or species of carved lectern, on which the sacred book reposes, but except for this the whole of the floor space is bare. Curious paper masks, and figures which are used in theatrical performances, are suspended from the pillars, and in one corner are some colossal drums. The Doms or Nadiyals are not allowed to enter the main Namghor, and worship in a smaller building close by. Another Moamaria sattrā is situated at Gorpara in the Rohmoria mauza, and holds a grant of 427 bighas of land on favourable terms.

The Tiphuk sattrā is said to have been founded in the latter half of the eighteenth century, and was situated in the Ujannakhankbola mauza. There were no temple lands allotted to this institution, but the gosain, who is an Ahom, was allowed a remission of Rs. 10 on his land revenue, and remissions of Rs. 3 were allowed to 106 of his disciples. This concession has now, at the request of the gosain, been withdrawn, and in its place he has been given a thousand acres of land under thirty years

lease in the Buri Dihing mauza, to which it is proposed to move the *sattras*.

Most of the Assamese in the Tipling and Ujannakhan khola mauzas are disciples of the Tiphuk gosain, while the Moamarias are found in the Rangagora, Chabua, Polonga, Rohmorla, Bogdong, and Madarkhat mauzas. Elsewhere, the bulk of the Vaishnavites are disciples of the gosains of Auniati, Dakhinpat, and Garamur.

Temples

In addition to the *sattras*, there are a few small temples in the district, all of which are situated north of the Brahmaputra. The buildings are insignificant erections of bamboos, reeds, and thatch, and each of them is endowed with a few acres of land held revenue free or at half the ordinary rates. The following statement shows the names of these so called temples and the mauzas in which they are located.

<i>Mauza.</i>		<i>Temple.</i>	<i>Mauza</i>		<i>Temple.</i>
Lakhimpur	...	Nil Gosain.	Naobaicha	...	Lonpani Mura- bhoga.
Do.	...	Panchanan Gosain.	Gohaingaon	..	Harhi
Do.	..	Boithaathi Gosain.	Narayanpur	...	Phulpani.

The number of temples and *sattras* in Lakhimpur is small enough, but this is not unnatural in a frontier district, which was too remote from court, and too much exposed to raiders from the north and east, to offer many attractions to the priestly caste. The population too was sparse, and Brahmans doubtless shrank from settling amongst the rude and jungly inhabitants of Lakhimpur. Relics of the Chutiyas'

barbaric creed are to be found in the Sadiya mauza ; and in the villages of Kokramara, Lakhimpur, Kundilgao, and Bozalgaon there are silver images of the old gods and goddesses such as Tameswari, Buraburi, and Kesakhata, which are worshipped by the people.

The most sacred place in Lakhimpur is, however, the Brahmakund, a deep pool in which Parasu Ram is said to have cleansed his axe after the slaughter of the Kshatriyas, and which is an object of pilgrimage to devout Hindus from every part of India. From Sadiya, the would-be pilgrim can go by road to Chunpura, a distance of 16 miles. Here he must take to his boats, and the strength of the current can be judged from the fact that, while the journey up stream to Mishmi ghat takes two days or more, down stream it can be completed in $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours. From Mishmi ghat it is a march of about 14 hours to the Brahmakund, the route for the most part lying along the dried up beds of rivers, and in some places for several miles up running streams. At Chowkham's village near Mishmi ghat, there are the shops of several *kaiyabs*, but this is the only place where supplies can be obtained. The charge for a boat from Sadiya to Mishmi ghat and back is Rs. 2 per head ; and from Chowkham onwards, the cost of each coolie is Rs. 5, in addition to Rs. 2 commission to the Khamti chief by whom they are supplied. The pool itself is situated at the point where the Brahmaputra debouches from the hills upon the plain. The river at this point sweeps round in a mighty curve, and the Brahmakund is situated in a back water on the south bank. It is

The
Brahmakund

surrounded on every side with hills, and the scenery in the neighbourhood is wild and impressive.

**Muham-
madanism.**

The proportion of Muhammadans (3 per cent.) is lower than that found in any other plains district of the Province. This is due to the fact that Lakhimpur is situated at the extreme end of the valley, well beyond the Moslem zone of influence. Most of the Muhammadans in 1901, were found in the sadr subdivision, and over a quarter of the total number were residing in the town of Dibrugarh. The first Muhammadan colonists are said to have settled about 100 years ago at North Lakhimpur and Jaipur. On our occupation of the country, Muhammadan sepoy stations at Dibrugarh and Sadiya contracted alliances with the women of the country, and made their homes in these two cantonments. Other recruits came in the shape of boatmen and traders from Bengal, with a certain number of ex-garden coolies. In 1872, there were only 3,826 Muhammadans in the district, but by 1901, their numbers had risen to 11,925. There are six mosques in Dibrugarh alone, five of which are masonry buildings. In the interior, worship is generally conducted in a hut, which occasionally takes curious forms. At Margherita, for instance, the mosque is a curious looking little building with a corrugated iron roof, and walls of well-tarred planks, which looks like anything rather than a place of worship.

Animism.

Most men find considerable difficulty in giving a clear and intelligible account of the faith that is in them, and the unsophisticated hillman is no exception to the general rule. Broadly speaking their religious

beliefs seem to fall under the following heads. Unlike the German metaphysician, they have no uncomfortable doubts with regard to their own existence, and the existence of the material world. To account for the production of these visible phenomena, they put forward various theories, which are hardly more improbable than the accounts of the creation given in most religious systems. The way in which the world came into existence is, after all, a matter of no very great importance, and the essential object of religion is to ensure a comfortable passage through life to its followers. No country or community is exempt from pain and trouble, and to the dwellers in the plains of India has been allotted a fairly liberal portion of the ills of life. When the cattle die, or small-pox or cholera visit the village, or other trouble comes, it is only natural to suppose that somebody or something is the cause of these misfortunes. The simple tribesmen then endeavour to ascertain the particular spirit from whose displeasure they are suffering, and to appease him in whatever way they can. A description of the various forms of tribal belief and of different methods of divination will be found in the Report on the Census of Assam in 1901 pages 46-49.

The number of animists in Lakhimpur is smaller than in any other district in the Assam Valley. In 1901, they formed less than 5 per cent. of the total population; whereas in the four western districts, the proportion ranged from 21 to 31 per cent. More than two thirds of these animistic people were censused in the

North Lakhimpur subdivision, where they formed about 16 per cent. of the total population.

Buddhists
4,572.

The Buddhists of Lakhimpur are not, as in most of the other districts of Assam, merely Bhutias, Nepalese, and other temporary immigrants. Most of them are Khamtis, Singphos, or Phakials; people, who have emigrated from Bor Khamti, the Hukong Valley, and the Shan States, and have settled in Assam. In the Phakial village on the Dihing river near Margherita, there is a regular Buddhist monastery. The building, like the other houses in the village, is raised upon stout posts, well out of reach of flood, and consists of one large room with several smaller chambers leading out of it, while from the centre of the roof rises a curious pagoda like erection. At one side of the main hall is a raised dais, adorned with curious pictures representing the tortures of the damned. To the mild Buddhist artist, to whom all life is sacred, this subject proves as fascinating as to the medieval priest. The unfortunate sinners are represented as being chased and torn by dogs, and speared by the evil spirits who accompany them, as being slowly crushed between rocks till blood oozes from their mouths and noses, and as being hurled into lakes of fire. Others are to be seen struggling in the thorny cane brake, or with cords around their necks being strangled and otherwise mutilated by evil looking demons. At the back of the dais there is an altar on which stand some twenty gilded images of Buddha, the largest being as much as two or three feet high. But the most curious thing about this place, right on

the frontier of a frontier district, is the strange mixture of east and west. Before the altar stands a camp table, save the mark, on which are placed quaint specimens of Burmese lacquer ware, intermixed with flower vases of a shape and pattern which sometimes disfigure a third class seaside lodging house in Eng and. On the floor around the Buddhas are to be seen almirahs with glass doors, looking glasses that are usually reserved for the bed-rooms of dak-bungalows, cheap American clocks, and other of the more hideous products of western civilization. The monks themselves have come from Burma, and, as in Burma, teach the village boys to read and write. The complicated Burmese character is laboriously inscribed on wooden boards smeared with charcoal, with pens that, like the teachers, have come from the neighbourhood of Moulmein. The Phakials themselves live in houses on piles, which are thatched with tokow leaves, (*livistonia jenkinsonia*) in place of grass. In the front verandah stands the loom on which the women weave cloths of a curiously complicated tartan. A part of the inner room is divided into tiny cubicles, and the Phakial sense of modesty is evidently more developed than is usual in Assam. More than half of the Buddhists enumerated in the district were Singphos and Khamtis, and a considerable number of the Nepalese professed themselves followers of this religion.

The Jains are the enterprising Marwari merchants, who have succeeded in obtaining so large a share of the district trade. The Brahmos belong to the advanced

Other Religions.	
Jains	371
Brahmos	37
Sikhs	15

and educated classes, the number of the Sikhs is too small to call for comment.

Christians.

The number of Christians is higher in Lakhimpur than in any other of the plains districts except Goalpara, and, as the figures in the margin show, the number of native Christians has been steadily increasing. Nearly half of these described themselves as "Kistan" and did not commit themselves to a preference for any special sect. Those who were brave enough to grapple with the intricacies of theology returned themselves either as Baptists or as members of the Anglican Communion.

Native Christians.	
1881	610
1891	1248
1901	2606

Occupation.

As in the west of the Province, agriculture is the staple occupation of the people, but the proportion supported by it (87 per cent) is lower than that in most of the important tea districts. This is due to the existence of valuable coal mines at Tikak and Ledo, in which a large number of coolies are employed, to the oil wells at Digboi, and to the railway which carries these products to the Brahmaputra. The saw mill industry is also of some importance, and the enormous foreign population, who do not, like the natives of the country, provide for most of their own simple wants, supports a larger proportion of traders than is found in any other district in the Province. Nearly two-fifths of the persons supported by agriculture were garden coolies or their dependants. The immense majority of the remainder were petty cultivators holding direct from Government, as in this sparsely populated district the number of persons, who are willing either to occupy the land of another as a tenant, or to cultivate it as a servant, is naturally

small. The boating and fishing castes are not very strongly represented, and a large number of them have either abandoned their traditional occupation for agriculture, or have preferred to return it as a more respectable avocation on the census schedules. In 1901 the occupations of the people were classified under five hundred and twenty different heads, and details for the great majority of these heads will be found in Table XV, Part II of Part II of the Census Report. These figures do not, however, lend themselves readily to review. The proportion of workers to the total population (67 per cent.) is unusually high. This is due to the fact that the wives and daughters of the ordinary cultivator work in the fields, and to the large number of garden coolies, whose children begin to work at a very early age.

Feasts, singing parties, and *bhaonas* or simple theatrical performances are the principal amusements of the villagers. The *bhaonas* are often held in temporary sheds constructed by the road side, and on a winter's morning the traveller who is early abroad frequently comes upon parties of revellers still lingering over the pleasures of the previous night. The *dol jatra*, or festival in honour of Krishna in February or March, when the image of the god is swung to and fro, and the people pelt one another with red powder in memory of his amorous exploits with the milk maids of Brindaban, is not in much favour with the Assamese, but is an occasion of great merry-making for coolies and other foreigners. The *jammastami* in honour of Krishna's

Amusements
and
festivals.

birth in August or September, and the *Sivaratri* in memory of Siva in March, are kept as fasts rather than feasts, and the Durga Puja, like the *fagua* or *dol jatra*, is not a festival in which the Assamese Vaishnavites take much interest. The Kali Puja or *dewali*, which follows the Durga and Lakshmi Pujas, is a great occasion with the Marwari merchants.

The Bihus.

The special festivals of the Assamese are the three *bihus*, and the *sradh* ceremonies of Sankar Deb and Madhab Deb, the founders of the Mahapurushia sect. The Kartik *bihu* is celebrated on the last day of Aswin (October 14th.), and is not an occasion of very much importance. Hymns are sung in honour of God, and, in place of their usual meal of hot rice and curry, the people take cold food such as curds, molasses, plantains and cold rice. The Magh *bihu* is the harvest home, and begins on the last day of Pous (January 14th.). For weeks beforehand tall heaps of rice straw piled round a central pole, are a prominent feature in the rural landscape. At the dawn of day the villagers bathe and warm their chilled bodies at these bonfires, a very necessary precaution, as at this season of the year the mornings are always cold and generally foggy. The Magh *bihu* is to some extent a childrens' festival, and most of the jollification is confined to the smaller boys, who sing and dance and feast in small grass huts that have been constructed for the purpose. The Baisakh *bihu* which begins on the last day of Choet (April 14th.) is in honour of the new year. The cattle are smeared with oil mixed with matikalai, turmeric, and rice, and

are then taken to the nearest stream and bathed. The villagers go from house to house visiting their friends and relations, and offer them presents of cloths and other things. Buffalo fights are organised in the rice fields, but these contests are rather tame affairs and the animals very seldom injure one another. A game is also played with eggs, in which one is banged against the other, and the egg which cracks becomes the property of the owner of the cracker. This *bihu* is an occasion of some license, as boys and girls dance together in the fields and sing suggestive songs, and lapses from chastity between members of the same caste are considered almost venial. This is the season of the year when run-away matches are most common, and during the next few weeks the outraged but avaricious parent complaining of the abduction of his daughter, is by no means an uncommon sight in the local courts. The *sradh* ceremony of Sankar Deb is celebrated in August-September and that of Madhav three days before the *janmastami*. All work is laid aside on these two days and the people devote their time to feasting and the singing of hymns.

North of the Brahmaputra the villagers periodically assemble and offer prayers to God, imploring him to protect them from cholera, cattle plague, and similar misfortunes. In the Gohaingao mauza a large camp meeting of this sort takes place every year in the Gohaingao Raidengia Pathar. In the Kadam and Pathalipam mauzas such gatherings are held every second year or so.

**Marriage
customs.**

The forms of marriage in vogue amongst the Assamese are the *hompura*,* or full Hindu rite, when the sacred fire is lighted and a priest is engaged to perform the ceremony, the *khuru moni pindha*, in which a feast is given to the friends and relations, and ornaments are given to the girl, and the system, under which the bridegroom, who is called a *caponiya*, enters the house of his prospective father-in-law, and works for his wife as Jacob worked for Rachel. Brahmans, Kayasthas, and well-to-do Kalitas invariably perform the *hompura* ceremony. The cost of this ceremony varies according to the circumstances of the contracting parties. In the Rangagora mauza it is said that the dignity of a 'hom' can be obtained for the modest sum of Rs. 40 : but this seems to be a remarkably low estimate, and this form of marriage seldom costs less than Rs. 100, and sometimes as much as four or five times that sum. This expenditure is incurred on the purchase of ornaments and clothing, on the payment of priests, musicians, and paliki bearers, and on a feast to the relations and friends, the principal ingredients of which are rice, molasses, curds, and betel nut. In Lower Assam even Brahmans generally take money for their daughters, but this practice is indignantly repudiated in Lakhimpur. Even amongst the lower castes the custom of taking a bride price seems to be falling into disfavour, and when a girl has been regularly courted it is said that the father often foregoes his claim for a cash payment. The process of courting consists, however, not in the presenting to the girl of costly trinkets and other

* A description of this ceremony will be found in the Census Report for 1901. P. 63.

tokens of affection, but in conveying substantial loads of rice, curds, plantains, betel nuts, tobacco, and even opium to her father on the occasion of each *bihu*. If the young couple elope without these necessary preliminaries, the father demands, and generally obtains, fair compensation in hard cash. These elopements are not uncommon and are due to several causes. Sometimes the price asked for the girl is unreasonably high, or at any rate beyond the resources of her lover. The lady will then consent to an abduction ; as when once her lover has obtained possession of her person, her parents are more disposed to be amenable to reason. Sometimes she takes a dislike to her affianced lover, and, in spite of his protracted wooing of her father, takes the law into her own hands and goes off with the man that she herself prefers. Sometimes the father is a party to the fraud, and after taking presents from one man hands over the girl by private treaty to another. Complaints of abduction are not uncommon in the criminal courts, but the great majority are of a civil nature, and are generally settled by the payment of a small sum of money.

Most of the local authorities report that the *caponiya* is not allowed to have intercourse with the girl before he is publicly married to her, but, though such practices may not receive the formal sanction of the community, it is doubtful whether in private the girl would deny her favours to her affianced lover. The Ahoms generally marry by the *chaklong* rite, which has already been described. The Phakials near Margherita are reported to pay heavily for their brides, but in the neighbouring

mauza of Buri Dihing the cost of a wedding is said to be only forty or fifty rupees. The ceremony there consists of the distribution of alms in the presence of the Buddhist priest and the village elders, and a feast to the relations and friends. A feast is the essential part of the marriage ceremony amongst the animistic tribes, and the Miris further require that a girl of the bridegroom's family should be promised to some relation of the bride's. The girl in question may at the time be a child, but if, when she grows up, she is not duly handed over according to the terms of the agreement, the family of the original bride will take her from her husband, though by this time she may have borne him several children. In North Lakhimpur the Nadiyals marry by what is known as the *jhopa goriya* rite. The guests sit assembled in the courtyard of the house round six or seven baskets containing dried rice and other things. The bride and groom are loosely tied together with a scarf, and are led round the baskets by the bride's mother. The bride takes the lids off the baskets, the bridegroom puts them on again, and the elder girls in the meanwhile playfully strike them with branches of the castor oil plant. This form of ceremony has the advantage of being cheap, and only costs from twenty to twenty-five rupees, whereas a man who wishes to make some thing of a splash can spend ten times as much on the *hompura* rite.

CHAPTER V.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops grown—Rice—Mustard—Pulse—Fibres—Agricultural implements—Sugarcane—Causes affecting productiveness of land—Garden crops—Outturn and value of staple crops—Floods—Live stock—Development of tea industry—Labour supply—Site of gardens—System of cultivation and manufacture—Outturn and prices—Forests—System of management—Timber trees.

The staple food crop of the district is rice, which in **Crops grown** 1902-03 covered 56 per cent., of the total cropped area. Other important crops are tea, 27 per cent., and orchard and garden crops 7 per cent., but a large part of the area shown under this head is occupied by the homestead, and it is doubtful whether as much as one half is actually under cultivation. Mustard occupied 3 per cent. of the total cropped area, miscellaneous food grains, nearly all of which are different forms of pulse, 2 per cent., and sugarcane 2 per cent. Wheat, barley, and gram, the food grains of Upper India, are grown in small patches by immigrants from those parts, but the total area under these three crops in 1902-03 was only 34 acres. The area under different crops will be found in Table VII. The general system of cultivation and the manner in which the staple crops are raised is described in the following paragraphs.

Rice. Sal.

Rice falls under three main heads, *sali*, *ahu*, and *baò*; the proportion of the total rice area normally occupied by each of these three classes, being *sali* 84 per cent. *ahu* 14 per cent. and *baò* 2 per cent. *Sali* dhan or transplanted winter rice, is first sown in little beds or nurseries (*kothiatoli*) near the homestead. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times, and is generally manured with cowdung and sweepings. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice fields in the proportion of about 1 to 16. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is steeped in water for two or three days, spread out to allow it to germinate, and sown broadcast over the bed in May and June. It comes up a rich emerald green, and, at the beginning of summer, these patches of the brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile, the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The industrious husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain. The process is repeated from four to eight times, till the land has been reduced to a rich puddle of mud, but the bulk of the ploughing is not done till May or June. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired, and if the fields adjoin the road or the village site they are fenced in with split bamboo. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks old, they are taken from the nursery bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they

are planted out in handfuls (*gach*), each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, but the handfuls are generally placed about 18 inches apart. It is not unfrequently the practice to steep the young plants in water before they are planted out, and if they seem too luxuriant, the tops are cut off at the time when they are removed from the nursery. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of September, and is generally carried out by women. The work is of a most arduous description, and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, under the rays of a burning tropical sun. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty, but about the beginning of October they begin to fill, and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of January harvesting is going on. The women grasp a handful of the ears and cut them off about eight inches below the head. These handfuls (*muthi*) are tied up with a piece of straw and left in the field for a few days to dry. When the grain is ready to be transported to the granary, the *muthis* are made into larger sheaves. Six *muthis* form a *thor* or *jhap*, and five or six *thors* a *dangari*. A *dangari* is then affixed to either end of a sharp pointed bamboo called *biriya*, if a split springy bamboo, or *kanmari* if of a larger stouter kind, and the load, which is called a *bhar* and carried across the shoulder, is taken to the homestead by the men.

The different kinds of *sali* dhan fall under two main

divisions, *lahi* and *bar*. *Lahi* ripens earlier than *bar*, and, though the grain is of a finer quality, the yield is appreciably smaller. It is planted on the higher fields which dry up first at the conclusion of the rains, and which are thus not suitable for *bar*. Altogether there are said to be not less than 70 different varieties of *sali* dhan in the district.

Bao dhan. *Bao* dhan is sown broadcast about the end of March, the field having been previously prepared by four or five ploughings. It is grown in flooded tracts, and the embankments made between the fields are smaller than in the case of *sali*, and are sometimes dispensed with altogether. It ripens about the beginning of January, and is harvested in the same way as *sali*. *Bao* dhan is hardly ever grown except in the low land in the Dibrugarh tahsil, and the country lying between the left bank of the Subansiri and the Brahmaputra. The crop is a precarious one as it is liable to be destroyed by flood, and the population is not yet sufficiently dense to render it necessary to occupy the less favourable tracts.

Ahu dhan. *Ahu* or summer rice is grown either on high land, or on low land near the Brahmaputra, the Luhit, and the Subansiri. For low land cultivation the usual procedure is as follows :—

In May the jungle is pressed down and burnt, and the land left till towards the end of the rains. The jungle that has sprung up in the interval is cleared in the same way, the process being known as *gojola kata*,

and ploughing begins in January. The field is ploughed three times and harrowed, and the clods are broken up by a mallet. Another ploughing and harrowing follow, the seed is sown, and the land again ploughed and harrowed, to ensure that the grain becomes thoroughly mixed with the soil. When the plants are about six inches high and catch the wind *botah boloah*, they are harrowed again and weeded, and finally harvested about the end of August. The crop is, however, a precarious one, and is liable to be destroyed by a sudden rise of the river. The plants can live under water for as much as a week, but if, after this time, the floods do not retire, they are permanently destroyed. *Ahu* is often grown on the *chapolis* in conjunction with mustard, and no jungle cutting is of course required when the soil has been already cleared for the oil seed crop. The same field is seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. The weeds, which were unable to find a lodging under the dense growth of *ikra* (*saccharum arundinaceum*), *khagari* (*saccharum spontaneum*) and *nal* (*phragmites roxburghii*), with which the land in its natural state is covered, soon spring up when once the jungle has been removed. After the third year, it is less trouble to burn fresh jungle than to clean the old fields of weeds, and by a change of site the peasant gets the further advantage of the manure of ashes for his next year's crop.

High land *ahu* is grown on land which is too high for transplanted rice, and is fairly common in the Ujan Nakhankhola mauza and in the country near the foot.

of the Himalayas. In its natural state this land is covered with a scrubby forest, and, as the same field is not cropped for more than three years in succession, the *ahu* cultivation of Lakhimpur closely resembles the *jhum* cultivation of the hill tribes. It is a significant fact that this high land *ahu* is seldom combined with pulse and mustard, though there is no reason why one or other of these crops should not be taken from the field in the cold weather. After the land has remained fallow for five or six years, the villagers return to it again.

Mustard.

Mustard, as has already been said, is usually grown in conjunction with *ahu* on the riparian flats. The jungle is cut down in February and March, and, if the land cannot be prepared in time for summer rice, is allowed to rot upon the ground. What remains is burned in October, the stumps are dug out, and the land is then ploughed over four or five times. The seed is sown about the middle of November, and the plant is ready to be pulled from the field about the middle of February. It is generally left to dry for a few days, and is then tied in bundles and carried to the homestead, where it is threshed out by the cattle. Almost the whole of the crop is raised in the North Lakhimpur subdivision; Dhakuakhana, Gohaingao, Telahi, and Narayanpur being the mauzas in which most of it is grown.

Pulse.

Pulse is sometimes grown on the alluvial flats that fringe the Brahmaputra, in conjunction with summer rice

and mustard, but a crop is often taken from the land on which rice seedlings, early rice, and sugarcane have been grown, as it is generally and rightly thought to improve the quality of the soil. In the *chaporis*, if new land is taken up, the first proceeding is to cut and burn the reeds and grass. Only two ploughings are required, and those are of the very lightest character, and, if the ground is naturally clear of jungle, the seed is sometimes simply sown on the river flats as soon as the floods subside. Pulse is also scattered broadcast amongst the rice stubble, or between the *sali* plants, if the land is still soft; but this method is not generally in use. The seed is sown in September, and the crop is ripe about four months later. The plants are pulled up by the roots, left for a few days in the field to dry, and are then collected at the convenience of the cultivator. The seeds are threshed out by cattle, but as the grains do not separate readily from the pods, their efforts are supplemented by a man with a flail. Several different kinds of pulse are grown, but nine-tenths of the crop belong to the variety known as *mati-mah* (*phaseolus mungo radiatus*). Other kinds are *magu-mah* (*phaseolus mungo*), a species which has a smaller yield and requires more careful cultivation but commands a higher price and possesses a more delicate flavour. It is seldom grown except on the river *chaporis*. *Kala-mah* (*lathyrus sativus*) is grown, but not in any considerable quantities. It has a large yield but does not fetch a high price. The principal pulse producing tracts are the Dhemaji, Gohaingao, and

Telahi mauzas on the north bank, and the Dibrugarh tahsil.

Fibres. Jute is grown in small patches as a garden crop. The seeds are generally sown in April, and the plants are cut in August and September, stripped of their leaves, tied in bundles, and left to rot in pools of water for from seven to twelve days. When they are ready, a handful of stems is taken up, broken in the middle, and beaten to and fro in the water, till the inner part drops out and only the fibre remains. The bundles of fibre are then dried and are ready for use, but the area under jute is at present absolutely inconsiderable. Small patches of rhea (*boehmeria nivea*) are grown in the gardens of the fishing castes, where it is heavily manured. The skin is stripped off from the stem and the fibre separated from the outer covering. The thread obtained is exceptionally strong and durable, but the difficulty of decortication has hitherto prevented the growth of rhea on a commercial scale.

**Storage and
threshing of
grain.**

The grain is usually stored as it is brought from the field in an outhouse called *bhoral*. When it is required for use, the sheaves are untied and spread over the courtyard. Cattle are then driven round and round over the heap of grain and straw, till the ears have been finally separated from the stalk.* The grain is next passed through a sieve, and placed in a flat bamboo tray called *kula*. It is then jerked into the air and

*An experiment made by Mr. Darrah, Director of Land Record and Agriculture showed that nine bullocks took 2 hours and 8 minutes only to thresh out 7½ maunds of paddy.

allowed to fall back into the tray, or held aloft and allowed to fall slowly to the ground, till gradually the chaff is carried off. After threshing, the paddy is stored in huge drums, called *duli or mer*. They are made of split bamboo, and the outer surface is plastered over with clay and cowdung.

The agricultural implements in use are of a very simple character. The plough is usually made of the jack fruit tree or some other hard wood, and consists of three parts: the handle and body which are usually all in one piece, the pole which joins the plough at the junction of the handle and the body, and the yoke which is merely a piece of wood, fastened by rope at right angles to the pole, with pegs affixed to it, to keep it from sliding from the necks of the bullocks. The front portion of the body is sharpened to a point which is shod with iron, and in soft soil a piece of bamboo is sometimes substituted for the iron. This piece of iron is the only portion of the plough which the farmer has to purchase. The rest he makes for himself. The whole instrument is suited to the wretched class of animal required to draw it. It weighs as a rule about 20 lbs. and, when cattle are used, the yoke seldom stands as much as 36 inches from the ground. When buffaloes are employed, the whole plough is constructed on a larger scale. It is obvious that such an implement can only penetrate from three to four inches into the soil, but the wretched quality of the plough cattle prohibits the use of a more effective instrument.

The harrow (*moi*) is generally a bamboo ladder, about

Agricultural implements.
The plough.
Other implements.

eight feet in length, on which a man stands as it is drawn across the field. It is used to crush the clods turned up by the plough before mustard or summer rice is sown, and to reduce the fields required for wet rice to puddle. Its place is sometimes taken by a plain log of wood. It is prepared by the cultivator himself from the bamboos growing in his garden. Clods are broken by the mallet (*dheli mari*) which is also made at home. Hoes (*kodalis*) are used to trim the embankments (*alis*) which help to retain the water. The head is bought in the bazar, and costs from Re 1 to Re. 1-4, and is fitted with a shaft by the farmer himself. Sickles, (*kachi*) with which the rice is reaped, have also to be purchased and cost from two to four annas. In *ahu* cultivation, a large wooden rake (*bindha*), with teeth nearly one foot in length, is dragged over the crop by a bullock when the plants are about six inches high. The *nirani*, a kind of trowel with a long handle, is used for weeding *ahu* rice. The sugarcane mill is described in the paragraph dealing with the preparation of molasses. The ordinary implement used for husking grain is the *dheki*, a long beam with a pestle affixed at the end, which is supported by two posts at about two thirds of the length from the head. The shorter end is depressed by the foot, and the pestle is thus raised into the air; the weight is then removed, and the pestle falls into a small hole, in a piece of wood sunk level with the ground, in which the grain is placed. The *dheki* is the implement ordinarily employed by the Assamese to husk their rice or pulse, but the animistic tribes generally use a large wooden mortar

(*ural*) and a pestle (*muri*). All of these implements are made at home.

Sugarcane (*saccharum officinarum*) is propagated from the tops of the best canes, which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. Four principal varieties of the plant are recognised. The *bagi* or white stands about seven feet high and has yellow canes of a soft juicy texture. The *teliya* is shorter, harder, and thinner, and the canes are of a deep red or even purple colour. The *Bangala* or *Bam*, a foreign variety, is larger and more juicy than the indigenous kinds, but yields a smaller proportion of sugar. The *megala* is a hard and thin variety of the *mugi*, and, where grown, is planted round the edge of the field. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. The patch is fenced with split bamboo, and there is usually a stout hedge of arhar dhal (*Cajanus Indicus*); but constant watching is required to scare away jackals and other animals, and an empty oil tin with a clapper is generally to be seen suspended over each field. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, which is a troublesome proceeding. The earth from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued, until the relative

Sugarcane.

positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon ridges with the trenches in between.

Most of the sugarcane in Lakhimpur is grown in the Dibrugarh tahsil, and in the Sadiya, Rohmoria, and Madarkhat mauzas of the sadr subdivision; and in Gohaingao and Naokhari in North Lakhimpur. It is often planted out on virgin forest land, which needs no manure and gives a rich yield. The Nepalese, who are largely engaged on it's production, plant their tops at the time when they are reaping the ripe crop. Harvesting goes on from January to April, and during the winter nights and in the foggy mornings the drone of the sugarcane mill is heard coming across the fields, in nearly every part of the Assam Valley where the "works of men" are to be seen.

Preparation
of molasses.

The native form of mill is still used by the Assamese for the extraction of the juice; but the iron mill which is far more expeditious is coming into favour amongst the foreigners. The native mill consists of two wooden rollers, fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam, supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To the larger of the two (*mota bhim* as distinguished from *maiki bhim*) is affixed a pole, which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by the villagers themselves, but buffaloes are occasionally used for the work. The mill requires

rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture, and can only be made by the more skilful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times, till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into an earthen vessel, and is then transferred to a small boat scooped out of a log. When twelve or fifteen gallons have been collected, boiling begins. The furnace is hollowed out of the ground, and has four circular openings to receive the cauldrons, which are made of the most durable kinds of potter's clay. Two of these vessels are placed about 9 feet from the furnace mouth, and only serve to heat the juice before it is transferred into the other vessels to be boiled. When the juice has been reduced to the proper condition, it is ladled into a wooden vessel (*gholani*) shaped like a small dug-out, and is stirred for half an hour. As the stirring continues, the liquid loses its dark brown colour, and assumes the consistency and hue of yellow mud. It is then stored in earthen pots and the process is complete.

The fertility of the rice fields mainly depends upon the following five causes: the water supply, the quality of the soil, and the liability to injury from flood, wild animals, or shade. The first named factor is probably of most importance. The soil of the district varies from pure sand near the Brammaputra to clay so stiff as to be utterly unfit for cultivation. The land best

Causes affecting productivity of land.

suited for the growth of rice is a clay loam *alattia*, the most fertile variety of which is called *bher bheria*, and is particularly deep and soft. The animals which do most injury to the crop are pigs, elephants, and monkeys. Elephants leave disastrous traces of their presence, but luckily do not remain long in any one locality, and are generally only found in parts of the Saikhoa, Jaipur, Buri Dihing, Makum, Sadiya, and Tengakhat mauzas. Serious damage is sometimes done by insects which are called *keonkata*, *tupalia*, *gandhi* (*leptorisa acuta*) and *charaha* (*hispa acuesceus*). The *gandhi* is a small bug, which injures the rice plant by feeding on the stems and sucking all the sap from the young grains. It is most prevalent in July and August, and is particularly in evidence during a spell of hot dry weather. High wind and rain drive it back into the jungle, and good results are obtained by lighting fires of vegetable refuse to windward. The best remedy of all is to collect the insect by smearing a winnowing fan with some glutinous substance and brushing it over the ears of grain, when many of the bugs will be found adhering to the fan. This remedy should be tried in the morning or late afternoon as the insects do not feed in the heat of the day. The *charaha* is a tiny beetle, which eats away the outer surface of the leaves and stalks and thus affects the outturn of the crops. It attacks the young plants in the nursery and can most easily be destroyed there by spraying.* Smoking the fields also produces good

* The best solution is 1 lb. Paris green, 1 lb. freshly slacked lime or flour and 150 gallons water. The solution should be kept constantly stirred and should be sprayed on with a fine sprayer.

results, but must be continued for some days or the beetles will return. Rain is wanted when *sali* rice is sown and is transplanted, but is not needed for the sowing of *ahu* and *bao*. During every stage of its growth, the plant is benefitted by moderate showers, but rain is absolutely essential at the time when the ears are first appearing. Hail storms in December sometimes lay the crop and add materially to the cost of reaping, but fortunately are very local in their action.

One of the most valuable of garden crops is the plantain (*musa sapientum*). As many as ten main varieties of this tree are recognized, but the most important are these known as *athia*, *monohar*, *cheni champa*, *malbhog*, *jahaji*, and *pura*. The first two groups are again subdivided into a considerable number of different species. The commonest form of *athia* is called *bhim*, a large tree which is found growing in the garden of nearly every house. The fruit is considered cool and wholesome, and is very generally used as food for infants. The *monohar* is a somewhat smaller tree; the pulp of the fruit is white and slightly acid in taste, and is largely used in combination with soft rice and milk at village feasts. The *malbhog* and *cheni champa* are small trees, whose fruit is much appreciated by Europeans. The *athia* plantain is generally grown near the homestead, where it can obtain a plentiful supply of manure; but the finer varieties are planted at a little distance to protect them from the earthworms, whose attacks they are hardly strong enough to resist. Sandy soil and heavy clay

Garden
crops.

The Plantain

check the growth of the plant, and anything in the shape of waterlogging is most injurious. The trees are planted in holes about a foot wide and eighteen inches deep, and are manured with cowdung, ashes, and sweepings. Young saplings take from 18 months to two years to flower, and the flowers take from three to six months to turn to fruit. The plantain tree plays many parts in addition to that of fruit purveyor. The flower is much esteemed as a vegetable, the leaves serve as plates, and the trunks are used for decorative purposes on occasions of ceremony, and as food for elephants. An alkaline solution, distilled from the sheaths and the corm, is often used as a flavouring with curry, a practice which is mentioned by the Muhammadan historians of Mir Jumla's invasion. These portions of the tree are sliced, dried, and reduced to ashes. The ashes are placed in an earthen pot, in which there are several holes lightly plugged with straw. Water is then poured over them, which dissolves the alkali and trickles through the holes into the receiver below. The resulting product, which is known as *kharpani*, is used, not only as a seasoning, but as a hair wash, and as a mordant with certain dyes.

Other
garden
crops.

The betel nut (*areca catechu*) is grown almost as universally as the plantain, and with the bamboo, forms the great trinity of trees in which the houses of the Assamese are usually embedded. The plantation is hoed up, and kept clear of weeds, and the trees are most liberally manured with cowdung. The pan vine (*piper betle*) is frequently trained up their stems,

and the leaf and nut, which are invariably eaten in conjunction, are thus grown side by side. Tobacco is a plant which is to be seen growing in the majority of gardens. The seedlings are raised in carefully manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, watered for a few days, and are protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are first gathered in February and March, and there is a second but much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing, they are either dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo (*calunga*) and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, though this is not the use to which it is generally put, the leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and then are ready for the hookah. The commonest forms of vegetable grown are, spinach *pui* (*basella alba*) *lahi*, a species of *brassica*, different kinds of arums (*kachu*), different kinds of yams (*dioscorea*) and gourds, the country bean *urahi* (*dolichos lablab*), the common mallow *lafa* (*malva verticillata*) the radish *mula* (*raphanus sativus*), the sorrel *chukasag* (*rums vesicarius*) and the bringal (*solanum melongena*). Potatoes are also grown extensively in Sadiya and on the *churs* between the Brahmaputra and the Dibru, and about half the supply of the district is obtained from this quarter.

Yield and
value of
crops.

	lbs.
Sali	1,000
Ahu	800
Mustard	750
Molasses	2,400

The outturn of different crops varies according to the character of the season, and also to a great extent according to the character and level of the soil on which they are grown. The statement in the margin shows the normal yield per acre laid down by the Agricultural Department after a long series of experiments. These figures only represent a general mean, and even in a normal year there are many fields whose outturn varies largely from the average. The yield of rice, it may be premised, is expressed in terms of husked grain. Like the outturn, the cash value of the crop can only be approximately ascertained. The prices obtained by the raiyats vary to some extent in different parts of the district, but probably average about Re. 1-12-0 per maund of unhusked grain. Assuming that unhusked paddy yields 62 per cent. of clean rice, it would appear that the value of the harvest from an acre of *sali* is about Rs. 34, and from one of *ahu* Rs. 27. For mustard, the villagers generally get from Rs. 2-8 to Rs. 3 a maund so that the yield from one acre varies from Rs. 23 to Rs. 28. The price of molasses varies considerably from time to time and from place to place, and ranges from Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per maund. The value of the yield of an acre of cane ranges accordingly from about Rs. 120 to Rs. 150.

Floods.

South of the Brahmaputra, floods do comparatively little damage. The country near the river goes under water in the rains; but this fact is well known and duly recognized, and the pressure on the soil is so light that there is no necessity as yet for attempting to bring

these less desirable portions of the district under permanent cultivation. The spill water of the Dihing occasionally submerges the lower land in the Khowang and Jaipur mauzas, and steps have recently been taken to restore a bund which was erected in the days of native rule.

North of the river, the land is more exposed to the risk of flood. In the Sisi mauza, the Sisi, the Gai, the Gutung, and the Girgiri all overflow their banks, while a great part of the Dhakuakhana and Gohaingao mauzas, which adjoin it on the west, are submerged by the waters of the Brahmaputra and the Subansiri. Low lying land in the western part of the subdivision is liable to be overflowed by the Ranganadi, the Dikrang, and their tributaries, but considerable benefit has been derived from the protective works that have recently been constructed. The population is, however, so sparse, that no necessity has as yet arisen for attempting to occupy the less desirable portions of the north bank of the Brahmaputra.

Little or no attempt has as yet been made by the villagers to improve on the methods handed down to them from their forefathers, or to introduce new crops and staples. Manure is hardly ever used except for vegetables and garden crops, such as betel-nut or tobacco ; or to fertilize the little plot of land on which the seeds of rice are sown. The heavy rainfall renders artificial irrigation unnecessary for the growth of rice on land of ordinary level, and no attempt is made to bring the water on to the fields, except in the case of a few villages

Agriculture
not intensive

near some tea gardens in the Dibrugarh tahsil. Beyond selecting the best grain for seed, the villagers make little or no attempt to improve the character of the crop; and they do not always observe even this simple rule, as in Sadiya it is said that they persist in selling all the largest potatoes and planting tubers little larger than a marble. The villagers reap a rich harvest from the coolie to whom they sell rice, country vegetables, and poultry, and show little desire to experiment with new staples. The area under potatoes is said to be extending, and jute is grown in small patches near the homestead, but only for home use and not for sale. Sugarcane was at one time found to be a paying crop and was largely planted out by the Nepalese in forest land, from which they obtained a very fine return. The area under cane, rose from 2,000 acres in 1894-95 to 5,400 acres in 1901-02; but the price of molasses quickly fell, and the profits of the industry began to disappear. The Deputy Commissioner considers that this lack of agricultural enterprise is a serious matter for the indigenous population. In spite of the large areas of rich soil ready for the plough, between five and six hundred thousand maunds of rice are annually imported into the district, at a cost of from fifteen to eighteen lakhs of rupees.

Live stock.
Buffaloes.

The buffaloes of the district belong to two distinct breeds the Assamese and the Bengali.* The Assamese are the larger of the two, and are fine upstanding

* The information given in these paragraphs is taken from a note compiled by Mr. Darrah, Director of Land Records and Agriculture in 1887, and from reports received from the local revenue officers of Lakhimpur.

animals with widely spreading horns. During the cold weather, they are generally grazed in jungly tracts, and a wild bull often attaches himself to the herd, and becomes the sire of many of the calves. This continual infusion of a good strain of blood does much to maintain the excellence of the breed. The Bengali buffalo is a smaller and less imposing animal, and does not command so high a price, a bull costing from Rs. 20 to Rs. 30; but, in Lakhimpur, the Bengali buffalo is comparatively scarce, and the fine indigenous breed still holds its own. Nepalese buffaloes are also common. They are large animals but have smaller horns and longer tails than the Assamese variety. Assamese bulls cost from Rs. 25 to Rs. 60, and cows from Rs. 50 to Rs. 60, but a Bengali cow buffalo can be purchased for Rs. 30 or 35. The price, as is only natural, is lower in North Lakhimpur and in the more out lying parts of the district, such as Jaipur and Sadiya, than in the neighbourhood of Dibrugarh.

Buffaloes rarely get anything but grass and a little salt to eat. In the cultivated portion of the district they are usually placed in charge of a small half naked boy, whose legs can hardly stretch across the massive back of the animal he bestrides, and who guides it with a nose rope. In the *chaporis*, the herd is driven out to graze in the jungle, and follows the lead of the older cows, whose whereabouts is indicated by the metal or wooden bells that are dangling from their necks. They are often trusted to return in the evening of their own accord, and a long line of animals is sometimes to be seen swimming across a channel of the Brahmaputra, which separates

them from the huts in which the graziers live. Often too, as the sun is setting, a herdsman is to be seen climbing a *simul* tree, which raises its head above the surrounding wastes of grass, to call his buffaloes home. At night each animal is fastened by a nose rope to a post, and sleeps on the bare ground. The grazing industry is not, however, of as much importance in Lakhimpur as it is in some of the lower districts of the Assam Valley. Most of the *mo-kkutis*, as these grazing camps are called, are situated in the Dibrugarh tahsil, where in the cold weather there are said to be some hundred or more of them; there are a dozen near Sadiya, some ten at Sisi, and one or two in nearly every mauza in the North Lakhimpur subdivision. A cow is said to remain in milk for about ten months, and yields at the beginning from two to four seers every day. The amount gradually decreases till a month or so before the next calf comes, when it ceases altogether. The milk is very white, and rich in fatty materials, and consequently yields a large proportion of *ghi*. The cows are said to begin breeding when three years old, and to continue doing so for fifteen years; during which time they give birth on the average to about ten calves. The normal life of a buffalo is from 25 to 30 years. Age is judged by the incisor teeth.

Cattle.

Half starved, under-sized, ill bred, and not unfrequently diseased, the Assamese cattle are but sorry creatures. The bullocks find it a difficult task to drag even the light native plough, and the cows yield but a minimum of milk. The causes of this degeneracy

are not entirely clear, but are probably to be found in a total indifference to laws of breeding, in absolute neglect, and partly perhaps in the want of suitable fodder in the rains. No bulls are set aside to be the sires of the herd, and the cows are generally covered by a young and immature animal, who secures the object of his desires by his superior lightness and agility. The sire is often closely related to the dam, and she, in her turn, has had her strength exhausted by being covered, when herself little more than a calf, and by subsequent breeding without the smallest intermission. The cattle are never groomed, and, when an epidemic breaks out, no attempt is made to isolate the sick. Everything, as Mr. Darrah says, is left to nature, from the moment when the most active, and therefore probably the youngest bull of the herd has succeeded in covering a cow, until the progeny, after years of work and semi-starvation, dies neglected in some unfrequented jungle. Cows generally cost from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15, though double that sum is occasionally paid; bullocks cost from Rs. 15 to Rs. 30. Cattle like buffaloes are cheaper on the north bank than they are in the more densely settled tracts south of the Brahmaputra.

Livestock are generally grazed on the rice *pathars* after the crop has been carried, and in swamps and marshes till the water rises. During the rains the villagers are said to experience some difficulty in obtaining fodder for their cattle in the neighbourhood of Dibrugarh, and in the country which is to some extent

Grazing
ground.

exposed to flood, such as Khowang and Jaipur and the mauzas past which the Subansiri flows. Over the greater part of the district, population is, however, still too sparse for the question yet to have assumed an acute form ; and rice straw is not as a rule collected and stored against the rainy season.

Goats and
sheep and
ponies.

The goats are almost as degenerate as the cattle. They yield but little milk, the whole of which is taken by the kids, and are only kept for food or sacrifice. At night they are usually shut up in a small out-house with a raised floor, which is approached by a slanting board or sloping bamboo platform, as a protection against jackals. There is no indigenous breed of sheep, the animals imported do not thrive, and the total number in the district is but small. The country ponies are, if anything, even more miserable specimens than the cattle. Few of them are as much as twelve hands in height, and they possess neither pace, endurance, nor stamina. European residents are compelled to obtain all their horse flesh from Calcutta.

A census of live stock was taken in 1899, and disclosed the following results. Bulls and bullocks, 51,000 ; cows 43,000 ; bull buffaloes 9,000 ; cow buffaloes 10,000 ; young stock 58,000 ; sheep 1,700 ; goats 37,000.

Cattle
disease

The most common forms of cattle disease are foot and mouth disease (*chapka*), rinderpest (*guti*), a disease called *kachua*, the principal symptoms of which are flatulence and diarrhoea, cholera, (*marki*) *matikhoa*, the first symptom of which is, as the name implies, the eating of earth followed by dysentery, and *sukuna* when

the animal refuses to eat and dies after ten days or a fortnight.

Reference must now be made to tea, which is by far the most important crop in Lakhimpur. Even judged by acreage, there is nearly one acre of tea for every two acres of rice; while if the standard of values is adopted, it will be found that the tea manufactured in the district is worth, even at wholesale prices, more than three times the total value of the rice crop.

Commence-
ment of tea
industry.

The indigenous tea of Assam was first brought to the notice of Government in 1826 by Mr. C. A. Bruce, a gentleman who had been engaged in trade in the Province while it was still under native rule, and who had been sent up the Brahmaputra in command of a division of gun boats in 1824. In 1834 a committee was appointed by Government to enquire into the possibility of cultivating tea on a commercial scale, who deputed three of their numbers Drs. Wallich, McClelland, and Griffiths to visit Upper Assam. Nurseries were established, a small establishment was entertained, under the general management of Mr. Bruce, to search the jungles for plots of indigenous tea, and cultivate them when discovered, and plants and seed were brought to Assam from China. Tea makers and trained Chinese were imported in 1837, and, in the following year, some of the manufactured product was sent to England, where it met with a most favourable reception. Assam tea was regarded as a curiosity, and the first eight chests which were put up to auction fetched sums which, at the present day, seem little short of fabulous, the prices paid

ranging from 1s. to £1-14-0 a pound. These were, however, only fancy prices, and a short time afterwards, a merchant offered to purchase tea in considerable quantities at prices ranging from 1-10½d. to 2s. a lb.

First begin-
nings in Lak-
himpur.

The following account of the first beginning of the tea industry in Lakhimpur was furnished by Capt. Bivar in 1859.*

In the district of Lakhimpore, the cultivation of the plant was first undertaken by the Government. In 1835, a few indigenous plants, taken from the forest at "Ningroo," bordering on the Singphoe country were put down on a strip of land at the "Koondil Mookh" at Suddiyah. The garden there established did not succeed. The soil, which was alluvial, was unadapted for the cultivation, and this led to a removal of material to Jaipore in the Sibsagar Division. Here the cultivation of Tea was persevered in until 1840, when, with a view to promote enterprise and the development of Tea as a resource, the Government transferred two-thirds of its Tea establishment to the Assam Tea Company. After this the Government operations were confined to a plantation in Muttock, on a spot where much indigenous Tea had been discovered, and where the soil was found peculiarly favorable to the growth of the plant.

The Government garden in the locality alluded to at Chaboah was carried on from 1840 to 1848. Over this period, whether from the Assam Tea, then a produce little known to the commercial world, not being merchantable, or from a want of skill on the part of manufacturers

* Information with regard to the early history of the tea industry has been derived from.

- (1). Selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal No xxxvii. Papers relating to Tea cultivation in Assam. Calcutta. 1866.
- (2). Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of Tea cultivation in Assam, Cachar and Syhet. Calcutta, 1868.
- (3). Papers regarding the Tea Industry in Bengal. Calcutta, 1873.

Letter to Commissioner No. 71, dated 8th October 1859, Selections from the records of the Government of Bengal, Vol xxxvii p. 12.

the Government plantation was an unprofitable affair, in so much that it was deemed expedient to close it, and the Barri was disposed of (sold) in April 1849, to a "Chinaman" named "Among," who purchased it with all appurtenances for Rupees 952-14-8.

For three years following, there is little to notice in the annals of Tea cultivation. The Chinaman who purchased Chaboah (at present one of the finest plantations in the district) could make little of it. Lack of energy, as much as want of funds, paralyzed his operations, and in 1851, through the instrumentality of Colonel Hannay, an officer whose exertions have contributed much to the development of Tea cultivation in this part of Assam, Chaboah changed hands, and became the property of Messrs. Warren, Jenkins & Co., for a consideration of Rupees 475.

During the time referred to above, the Chinaman was not the only failure; the period was one of depression as to manufacture of Tea. The works of the Assam Tea Company, as far as their operations in this district were concerned, were all but suspended. In their Barries little was done, rank vegetation was unchecked, and clearances were stopped. And it was not until the year 1852 that a favourable turn took place in the matter of Tea cultivation, which has since opened a prospect of wealth and prosperity for the district.

In the cold season of 1852, Colonel Hannay, who had always taken a lively interest in the products of the country, and who had a small garden close to Dibroo, where he raised cotton, sugarcane and tea, &c., for experimental purposes, having been successful in the plantation of a small patch of China Tea, increased the cultivation. Having obtained land sufficient to admit of extending his operations, in 1852 Colonel Hannay cleared and planted out about ten acres of land with Tea. At the same period Messrs. Warren and Jenkins, the proprietors of Chaboah, entered upon the formation of the Maejean Tea Barree, now a most flourishing plantation, the property of Mr. G. R. Barry, of Serajunge, and following the example first set by Colonel Hannay, an impetus was given to the extension of Tea cultivation which has led to Tea in Luckimpore having invited the attention of capitalists and to its promising fair to render the district one of the most important divisions of Assam.

In 1859, it was said that the total area taken up for

tea in Lakhimpur was 14,000 acres, of which 1,700 acres had been planted out, and yielded 282,000 lbs. of tea. Captain Bivar estimated the average value of the tea at six annas a lb., but it is difficult to believe that the price can have been as low as this.

The boom in
the early six-
ties.

1859 to 1863 was a period of steady but not abnormal or unwholesome expansion. In the latter year the possibility of making large fortunes out of tea attracted the attention of the speculating classes; and tea planting passed through a severe crisis, which was entirely due to the action of company promoters, who endeavoured to make money, not by manufacturing tea, but by hastily opening gardens to sell at most exorbitant prices to the credulous investor. The promulgation of the fee simple rules of 1861, was followed by a rush for land, which was aggravated by the orders of the Board of Revenue, who authorised District Officers to sell estates on a pen and ink sketch made by the applicant, before they had been properly surveyed and demarcated. Land thus obtained was hastily cleared of jungle, a few plants, the majority of which soon died, were hurriedly put out, and the place was sold to the unsuspecting public as a flourishing tea garden. To such a pitch was this procedure carried that there is one case on record, in which a manager received instructions from London, to clear and plant a certain area of waste land for delivery to a Company to whom it had been already sold as a tea plantation.

Scarcity of
labour.

Many of the planters, and some District Officers in Assam, thought that it was the duty of Government

to stimulate the slothful Assamese, and drive them to work on the plantations, by enhancing the land revenue assessment. This point of view did not commend itself to the Commissioner, Colonel Jenkins, who, while admitting that there was great want of industry and energy amongst the Assamese, declined to check their social improvement, or to reduce them to the unaccustomed misery of hard work, simply to provide the planters with cheap and abundant labour.*

It naturally followed that in spite of the high prices offered, local labour was not obtainable in sufficient quantities, and coolies, generally of the most miserable description, were sent up from Calcutta. The mortality in the depôts and on the journey was appalling. In the four years 1864 to 1867, the annual mortality in the largest depot ranged from 36 to 115 per cent. of the average daily strength; the latter enormous rate being calculated on a daily average of no less than 458 souls † Between 1863 and 1868, 54,352 coolies were imported to Assam, 1,712 of whom died *en route*. Even when the garden was reached, the mortality was generally high, and was sometimes quite appalling. In the Report of the Commissioners appointed to enquire into the state and prospects of tea cultivation, details are given for seven gardens in Upper Assam, on which the recorded mortality for half the year only in 1865 ranged from 16 to 39 per cent.

The returns submitted were declared by the Commissioners to be unsatisfactory, but in 1866, 4,366 deaths were

* Letter No. III dated 24th October 1839.

† Report of the Commissioners, p. 28.

recorded in Upper Assam, which was equivalent to a death-rate of 180 per mille on the total number remaining plus the total number of deaths. These days of high mortality have happily now passed away. During the ten years ending with 1889, the average annual mortality amongst adult coolies was 48 per mille, and during the next decade it sank to 42. In 1901 it was less than 31 per mille. It may, perhaps, be thought that even these are high death rates for a population of adults, and in comparison with those recorded in England this is no doubt the case. But comparisons of this sort are most misleading, as, though the death rate in Assam is very imperfectly recorded, it is certain that it largely exceeds the rate for the more civilized countries of Western Europe. It must, moreover, be borne in mind that many of the coolies are recruited from the ranks of the physically unfit, that they suffer from the effects of a change of climate, and that, when working in new clearances, they are exposed to especially unfavourable conditions. The Commisioners * in 1868 considered that the Bhutan field force furnished a fair analogy to garden coolies, and pointed out that the death rate amongst that force was 160 per mille, or very little less than the death rate even in those days on Assam tea gardens. The planters spare neither trouble nor expense in their efforts to preserve the health of their employees; and many of the weakly ones who die, would probably have lived no longer had they been allowed to remain in their own homes.

* P 56 of their report

During the tea boom, large sums were paid for labour and for seed, land which was little better than jungle was sold for preposterous prices, and the tea companies which were formed under these unfavourable conditions soon collapsed. 1866, 1867, and 1868 were years of great depression. Mr. A. C. Campbell, in a note written in 1873, describes how young men who had been engaged in England, were turned adrift when the collapse came "in a most inhospitable country without a penny or a friend; some died, others had literally to beg their way out of Assam, most had to regret impaired constitutions, and all the loss of some of the best years of their life." In 1869 affairs began to take a more favourable turn. It was seen that properly managed gardens could be worked at a satisfactory profit, and that the estates of the bubble companies, which had been bought for small prices after the great crash were doing well in the hands of their new owners. Since 1870, there has been an enormous expansion of the industry, and while the area under cultivation and the outturn have alike increased, the cost of production and the price obtained have steadily diminished. Like other industries, tea has experienced periods of prosperity and depression; but there has been no such boom with its inevitable collapse as occurred in the early sixties.

Statistics for the early years during which the industry was developing are not readily available, and are too inaccurate to deserve attention. In 1874, it is said that there were 11,680 acres in bearing, which yielded 1,812,000 lbs. of manufactured tea. In 1882

Collapse in
1868.

Expansion
of the indus-
try.

the area under mature plant was reported to be 32,952 acres; but the inaccuracy of the returns can be judged from the fact, that in 1884 it suddenly dropped from 32,897 to 25,881 acres. The cultivated area kept steadily expanding till 1896, when there were 48,152 acres under plant, with an outturn of 19,486,000 lbs. The Industry was at that time enjoying one of its periodical waves of prosperity, and capital was readily invested in its extension and development. In 1900, the total area under tea was 67,509 acres and the outturn 25,698,000 lbs. Unfortunately since then it has suffered a serious check, which was partly due to the unduly rapid increase in the out put, partly to the growing difficulty in obtaining labour, partly to the very high duty imposed on tea in England. Figures for subsequent years will be found in Table VII.

**Labour
supply.**

The supply of local labour is very limited, and the plantations have to be worked by coolies imported from other parts of India. In the ten years ending with 1890, no less than 92,000 labourers were brought up to the gardens, and in the next decade the number amounted to 149,000. The largest numbers are obtained in times of famine, the two record years being 1897 with 27,000, and 1900 with 18,400. The following abstract shows the areas from which the labour force in 1901 had been recruited.

	Total	...	...	...	Number.	Percentage.
					1,30,356	—
Arsam	...	...	...	...	26,879	21
Chota Nagpur	...	...	...	...	51,553	40
Other parts of Bengal	...	...	...	...	26,152	20
United Provinces	...	...	...	...	2,662	2
Central Provinces	...	...	...	...	17,246	13
Madras	...	...	...	...	1,945	2

The great majority of those born in Assam are the children of foreigners born after they had migrated to this Province. Natives of the United Provinces do not do well in Lakhimpur, and only a few of them have been imported to the district; and there is a large proportion of immigrants from Chota Nagpur, whence most of the finest coolies are obtained.

The journey from the recruiting districts is troublesome and expensive, the class of persons capable of working successfully in the damp climate of Assam is limited, and of recent years the supply of labour available has not been sufficient to satisfy the requirements of the planters. Special Acts have been passed to regulate the relations between the employers and their labour force. Careful provision is made for the welfare of the coolie. He is housed in neat and comfortable lines, he is provided with an excellent water supply, generally drawn from masonry wells, and when sick, he is cared for in a comfortable hospital by a native doctor working under the supervision of a European medical man. The provision of all these comforts and the importation of the labourers themselves cost large sums of money, which no one would be willing to expend without some guarantee that the coolies, when imported, would consent to remain on the plantation. This protection is afforded by the law, (Act VI of 1901) which lays down that a labourer, provided that he is well-treated, must not leave the garden to which he is indentured before the expiry of his contract, unless he chooses to redeem it by a money payment. The simpler Act (XIII of 1859), which em-

The
labourers.

powers a magistrate to order a labourer who has taken an advance, to complete the work on account of which the advance was given, is also very generally used. There are few districts in India where the tea industry is in a more flourishing condition than it is in Lakhimpur, and the prosperity of the proprietors reacts favourably upon the condition of the labourers. Wages are good, the climate is healthy, and there is an abundance of fertile land still lying waste. The cooly who has served his time can easily obtain land on which to settle down, and finds a market either for his surplus produce or his leisure hours at his very doors; as the demand for rice, vegetables, poultry, and unskilled labour is out of all proportion to the supply.

**Site of tea
gardens.**

Most of the gardens are situated a little to the east of Dibrugarh, and along the railway line as far as Talap. North of the Brahmaputra, gardens have been opened on the high lands near the hills to the east of North Lakhimpur. Further information with regard to the area, size, and population of each garden in the district will be found in tabular form in appendix A.

**Soil required
for tea.**

A friable red loam is the soil that proves most suitable for tea. The plant requires a heavy rainfall, but anything in the shape of water-logging is most prejudicial to its growth, and gardens should only be planted out on land which can be well drained. Land which, in its natural state, is covered with tree forest is usually considered the most suitable, as the absence of timber generally shows, either that the place is liable to flood, or that the soil is sandy, or that the rainfall is deficient. But in

Lakhimpur many of the finest gardens, such as those owned by the Dumduma and Sadiya Road Tea Companies, have been planted out on a light soil covered by bamboo jungle.

Four distinct varieties of wild tea are recognised: Varieties of
plant.
Assam indigenous, which has a leaf from 6 to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches in length by 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ to 2 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches in width; the Manipur or Burma indigenous with a larger, darker, and coarser leaf than the preceding variety; Lushai or Cachar indigenous, whose mature leaf is from 12 to 14 inches long, and from 6 to 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide; and the Naga indigenous which has a long and narrow leaf. In addition to these four varieties there is the China plant, and different kinds of hybrids. The China tea is a squat and bushy shrub with small leaves, which gives a lower yield per acre than the other kinds. It is many years since China seed was planted out in new clearances, and considerable areas covered by this plant have been abandoned. In its natural state the indigenous plant attains to the dimensions of a tree, varying from 20 to 50 feet in height, though its girth seldom exceeds two feet. It has a vigorous growth and yields a large outturn of fine flavoured tea, but is delicate when young. Of the hybrid variety there are many qualities ranging from nearly pure indigenous to nearly pure China. A plant with a very small admixture of China is usually preferred, as this imparts the hardiness, the want of which is the one defect in the indigenous variety. During the boom in the nineties, the price of good tea seed rose to as much as Rs. 150 per maund;

but this was followed by a slump, when but a third of that sum became obtainable. The best seed in the district is obtained from the Hukanguri garden and now (1905) commands from Rs. 70 to Rs. 100 per maund, but inferior seed from village gardens is still practically unsaleable.

**System of
cultivation.**

The seed is planted in nursery beds in December and January and kept under shade till the young plants are three or four inches above the ground. Transplanting goes on between April and July, whenever there is rain, the plants being usually placed from four to five feet apart. During the first two years of their life, little more is required than to keep the plantation clear of weeds. By this time the plants are from two to four feet high, and at the end of the rains they are pruned down to fifteen inches or a foot to encourage lateral growth. In the third year the plant can be lightly plucked over, but the yield of leaf is small. Pruning is continued every year. Only about two inches are left of the wood formed since the previous pruning, and any unhealthy or stunted branches are removed. As an extreme remedy, old plants, in which there is a large proportion of gnarled and twisted wood, are sawn off level with the ground, and fresh shoots are allowed to spring from the root itself. During the rains the garden is hoed over several times, in order to render the soil permeable both to rain water and the roots of the bush. At the end of the rains the ground is hoed up to the depth of 8 or 9 inches. The object of this is to protect the land from drought, as the hoed up soil prevents the evaporation of water from the

lower strata. It also adds to the fertility of the land by exposing it to air, light, and changes in temperature. Manure has hitherto been little used. Oil cake and cowdung are sometimes spread about the plants, and exhausted land is sometimes top-dressed with rich soil from a neighbouring marsh. The cost of these operations is considerable and they are not invariably successful from the pecuniary point of view. Matikalai (*phaseolus radiatus*) is often sown amongst the bushes and hoed in as a green manure.

Plucking begins in April, and is continued till the beginning of December. The bud and the two top leaves are taken from each shoot, but fresh leaves soon appear, and in about five weeks time the shoot is ready to be plucked again. This throwing out of new leaves is termed a "flush," and there are usually six or seven full "flushes" in a season; though each bush is picked over every ten days or so, as the twigs develop at different times. The plucking is usually done by women and children, while the men are engaged in hoeing up the ground around the plants. The plant is liable to be attacked by a large number of pests, the best known being the tea mosquito or blight, the green fly, and the red spider. A full account of these pests will be found in "The pests and blights of the tea plant" by Watt and Mann, Calcutta 1903.

When the leaf has been taken to the factory it is spread out in thin layers on trays and allowed to wither. In fine weather the process takes about 18 hours, but if it is cold and wet 36 hours may elapse before the leaf

System of
manufacture.

is ready. When the leaf has been properly withered it is placed in the rolling machines. The object of rolling is to break up the cellular matter and liberate the juices, and to give a twist to the leaf. Rolling takes about three quarters of an hour, and after this the leaf is placed in a cool room for about 3 hours to ferment. It is then placed on trays in the firing machines, through which hot air is driven, until the last trace of moisture has been expelled, and the tea is crisp to the touch. The leaf is then passed through sieves of varying degrees of fineness, and the tea sorted into different grades. The best and most expensive quality is called broken orange pekoe, and is made from the bud or tip, which contains all the good qualities of tea in a more concentrated form than any of the other leaves, is stronger, and has a more delicate flavour. The other grades, which are differentiated by the size of the mesh through which they pass, are Orange Pekoe, Broken Pekoe, Pekoe, Souchong, and Fannings. After the tea has been sorted, it is fired once more to remove any moisture it may have absorbed from the surrounding atmosphere, and is packed in lead lined boxes while it is still warm. Tea loses largely in weight during the process of manufacture, and about four pounds of green leaf are required to produce one pound of the finished article.

**Outturn and
Prices.**

The character of the outturn depends largely upon the season, but still more upon the garden and the system of manufacture followed. In 1868 the Commissioner estimated that the average outturn was about 240 lbs. per acre; but this estimate was probably too low, as the

average yield in Lakhimpur during the five years ending with 1903 was 455 lbs, per acre. The introduction of machinery, and the improvement of the general system of cultivation and management have rendered it possible to effect a large reduction in the cost of the tea when placed upon the market. In 1868 it was calculated that tea must be sold at two shillings a lb. to yield a profit. Twenty years later the average price obtained by tea from the Brahmaputra Valley was 8 as. 2 pies, and, though in 1894 it rose to 10 as 5 pies, in 1898 it dropped to 6 as. 9 pies, and has since remained below that figure. Separate details are not recorded for the Lakhimpur district, but the average price obtained is, probably above the average for the valley as a whole.

The forests of Lakhimpur fall into two main classes, the reserved forests, which in 1902-03, covered an area of 340 square miles, and the unclassified state forests, which in the same year occupied the enormous area of 3,099 square miles. Unclassed state forest is, however, simply Government waste land, and does not necessarily possess any of the characteristics which are usually associated with the expression forest. It may be a sandy *chur*, or a huge expanse of low lying land covered with high grass and reeds and almost totally destitute of trees. It may be a small piece of arable land, which has been resigned by its former holder, and has not yet been settled with any other person; or it may be, what its name would naturally suggest, *i. e.*, actual tree forest. It is impossible to give even the roughest estimate of the proportion of unclassified state forest, which is actually

Forests.

under timber, but where the total area is so enormous it is obvious that, in a country with a heavy rainfall like Assam, the area covered with trees must be considerable.

**System of
management.**

The management of the Government forests is generally entrusted to a Deputy or Assistant Conservator. The unclassified state forests are, however, under the immediate control of the local revenue officials, who issue permits to settlement holders, under which they are allowed to remove a certain quantity of forest produce for their own requirements free of royalty. *

The trees are generally converted into logs in the forest, and dragged by elephants to the nearest river, whence they are floated down to the place where they are required. The statement annexed to this chapter gives in a condensed form details with regard to the situation, area, trade route, and market centre for each of the reserved forests in the district. These forests are all composed of evergreen trees, and the largest of them are situated near the Naga Hills, along the southern, boundary of the district. In the true sense of the word they are reserves, and, as yet, the requirements of the people are almost entirely met from unclassified state forests. This fact is clearly brought out by Table VIII, from which it appears that the total revenue from the

* The quantity allowed is 4 unreserved trees, 400 bamboos, 10 bundles of canes and 200 maunds of firewood, but there is in practice little check upon the quantity actually taken, and the question of abolishing the permit system and allowing villagers to take all that they need for their own use is under consideration. No restriction is imposed on the removal of thatching grass either for home consumption or for sale.

reserves in 1902-03 was only Rs. 668, fivesixths of which were obtained from the Jakai forest; while the huge Dihing reserve yielded a revenue of about 5 annas the square mile. The Jaipur forest is, however, the only reserve in which the traders wish to carry on their operations, and work is not encouraged there, as it contains little large timber of the better kind, though there is a fine young forest of Nahor, which if properly treated should be a valuable property at no distant date.

There are two minor forest products which are of considerable importance. The right to collect cane in the Government forests is put up to auction, and in 1902-03 the cane monopoly for the next five years was sold for no less a sum than Rs. 93,000. A duty of Rs. 17 per seer is levied on all rubber imported from the hills beyond the frontier, and the receipts under this head amounted to Rs. 39,000 in 1903-04. There is very little rubber remaining in the district outside the Government reserves, as the trees have been killed out by overtapping; but within these forests there are presumably a considerable number of trees, as lessees are willing to pay as much as Rs. 7,500 per annum for the right of working there, in addition to the royalty of Rs. 17 per maund of rubber found. The yield of timber and fuel, and the receipts and expenditure of the forest department are shewn in Table IX.

Cane and
rubber.

For timber required for sale, royalty is paid at the rate of Rs. 6 for each reserved tree, or 4 annas a cubic foot whichever is less, while for unreserved trees the rate is one anna a cubic foot, with a maximum of Rs. 2 for the

Timber
trees.

tree. The most valuable timber trees in the district, all of which fall in the category of reserved trees, are Nabor (*mesua ferrea*) Uriam (*bischoffia javanica*) Makai (*shorea assamica*) Hollock (*terminalia bellerica*) Gundroi (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*) Sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*) India Rubber (*ficus elastica*) and Khakan (*duabanga sonneratioides*). The Nabor has a very hard wood and is largely used for sleepers and scantlings, Hollock is used for scantlings and boats, and Simul (*bombax malabaricum*), which grows amongst the stretches of jungles grass in low lying land, is converted into tea boxes.

Timber
trade.

There are five saw mills in Lakhimpur. The Sisi mills, which employ some 350 hands, are situated in the Sisi mauza on the north bank of the Brahmaputra opposite Dibrugarh, and the Mekhlanadi and Halkatta saw mills in the Dibrugarh mauza. The Gharunia Sisi mills are in Larua mauza, and the Railway saw mills at Margherita. The tea box industry is, however, to some extent hampered by the preference which the agents in Calcutta have for boxes of foreign manufacture. Almost the whole of the timber trade is of a local character, as prior to the construction of the Assam Bengal Railway, the forests of Lakhimpur were very remote from the outside world. The tea boxes find a ready sale locally, and are sent to gardens lower down the river. Sleepers are purchased by the railway companies, and scantlings and other timber by the Municipality and Local Boards.

List of Reserves ten square miles and more in area.

Name of reserves.	Situation and character of soil.	Area (square miles.)	Date of constitution.	Routes for extraction of produce.	Market centres.
Upper Dihing	Low hills and plain, in south east corner of district.	144	1888	Assam Railways and Trading Coy's. Railway Line from 45th to 55th miles from Dibrugarh.	Dibrugarh and Margherita.
Dibru ...	Situated on the south bank of the Brahmaputra 20 miles east of Dibrugarh.	88	1890	Brahmaputra and Dibru rivers.	Dibrugarh.
Jaipur ...	Low hills and plains between Makum and Jaipur.	39	1888	Dihing river and possibly the Assam Bengal Railway about 7 miles distant down the Dihing river.	Jaipur.
Dihingmukh ..	On the south bank of Brahmaputra at its junction with Dihing river—12 miles south west of Dibrugarh.	21	1887	Dihing and Brahmaputra rivers.	Dibrugarh.
Jakai ...	Six miles south of Dibrugarh—north of the Sib-sagar road.	19	1887	Sib-sagar cart road from Dibrugarh.	Dibrugarh.
Kadam ...	In the North Lakhimpur subdivision, west of the Subansiri river and north of the trunk road.	21	1888	North trunk road and the Subansiri river.	North Lakhimpur.

CHAPTER VI.

INDUSTRIES.

Coal—Oil—Iron—Gold—Lime—Silk—Pottery—Brass and bell
metal—Weaving—Fishing.

**Coal.
Early
workings.**

The existence of coal in Upper Assam has been known from the earliest period of the British occupation of the Province. In 1825, Lieutenant Wilcox reported that coal was found near Barhat, on the Disang river; and in 1828, Mr. Bruce quarried some 5,000 maunds near Safrai, which were sent to Calcutta, and pronounced to be equal to English coal and the best ever found in India. Experiments continued to be made in a desultory manner, and in 1840, the Assam Tea Company were actually working the coal measures near Jaipur. In 1861, a contractor entered into an arrangement with Government for a period of three years, under which he undertook to keep not less than 1,000 maunds of coal in store at Dikhomukh, Tezpur, and Gauhati, for which he was to receive 10 annas a maund at the first place, 13 annas at the second, and 14 annas at the third.

On the expiry of this contract, attempts were made to attract capital to the industry. The coal fields were examined and reported* on by Mr. Medlicott in 1864-65, and in 1866, a notification was issued offering grants of coal bearing strata to the public. The area of a single grant was not to exceed 640 acres, a surface rent of six annas per acre but no royalty was charged, and the land was liable to resumption if operations were not commenced within three years of the date on which the grant was made, or if work was suspended, for five years or more. Seven grants in all were made, to Mr. Goode-nough, who interested himself in the petroleum industry, and to other gentlemen, but very little work was done.† All of these grants were in consequence resumed, with the exception of the Namdang and Tirap grants, which were purchased by Mr. Haly in 1871, and ultimately sold by him to the Assam Railways and Trading Company in 1892.‡ In 1875, shortly after the erection of Assam into a separate Administration, rules were framed by the Chief Commissioner for the lease of sites for coal mining. The size of the grant was limited to 50 acres, and the holding of more than one site in the same interest

* Mr. Medlicott's report will be found in the memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. IV, Part 3.

† Less than 600 tons of coal were sold from Mr. Haly's grants in the three and a half years ending with July 1870.

‡ There was some question (1) as to Mr. Haly's title to hold this land at all and (2) as to his title to hold the grants on a surface rent, free of all royalty on the coal. It was decided in 1893, that whatever may have been the original terms of the grant, Government owing to "waiver and acquiescence" had no longer valid ground for disputing these claims. The whole question is discussed at length in Assam Secretariat R. A. Prgs. Jan. 1894, Nos. 76-123.

was prohibited. These provisions were introduced as a safeguard against the creation of a monopoly, but the opinion expressed at the time that, the terms would not prove sufficiently attractive, was found to be correct.

Report by
Mr. Mallet.

In 1876, Mr. Mallet of the Geological Survey Department examined the coal deposits of the Naga Hills, and reported, that the Makum field in all probability contained fully eighteen million tons of coal, of which at least one half must be easily procurable.*

Mr. Mallet divided the coal measures of Lakhimpur into two fields, the Makum and the Jaipur. The most easterly point to which he traced the Makum field was the south east of Kerimgao. The Dirak river was the furthest point to the west at which coal had been discovered, so that the extreme points between which coal had actually been found were 13 miles apart, though the actual length of the field was probably somewhat greater. The coal seams are imbedded in brownish grey shales and sandstones, and some of them are of considerable thickness. South east of the Leap Nadi, there is a seam of solid coal 25 feet thick, but this seems nothing in comparison with the seam in the valley of the Namdang, which consists of a solid cliff of coal, no less than one hundred feet in height. The Jaipur field is situated in the Tipam hills to the south and east of Jaipur, the most northerly point at which coal has actually been found being the Tipam garden, though it is probable, that the coal bearing strata extend to the

* Mr. Mallet's report will be found in the memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XII Part 2.

northern extremity of the range. Only a small part of the measures appears above the alluvium, and nearly all the coal examined by Mr. Mallet was found to be of a crumbly character. The total quantity of marketable coal was estimated by him to be perhaps ten million tons ; but the data on which this estimate was formed were admittedly imperfect, and though there is undoubtedly a large quantity of coal in this field, it is impossible to express its cubical content with any approach to accuracy. No attempt is made to work this field at the present day.

The Chief Commissioner was by this time persuaded, that if these valuable deposits were to be opened up by private enterprise, more favourable terms would have to be offered to the promoters of the undertaking. The arguments in favour of this view were summarised as follows, in his letter No. 704 dated the 22nd March, 1879, to the Government of India.

Offer of more
liberal terms
by Govern-
ment.

“The rules for leasing these coal sites were sanctioned by the Government of India, but they were sanctioned experimentally only for three years, and the Government of India at the time expressed doubt, whether they would not be found to repel rather than to attract capital. The leading points in the rules are the limitation of area to 50 acres, the revenue being three annas per acre, and the royalty eight annas per ton. It is certain that, under these rules, no single application for a coal lease has been made ; and unless the indispensable preliminary of providing cheap and certain communication from the mines to the river is first undertaken by Government, it is certain that no lease will be so applied for. It can pay no one whose area is restricted to 50 acres, to undergo the requisite risks, with the certainty that competitors will profit by his failures ; nor could it pay such individual speculators to attempt the improvement of communica-

tions, the immediate effect of which would be, to introduce competitors on more favourable conditions than their own. Unless Government are prepared themselves to provide these means of communication, he is convinced that, the leases can only be profitably worked if sufficient inducement is given to a company to provide their own means of communication; and he inclines to believe that in practice, the only sufficient inducement will be a virtual monopoly of one or the other of the coal fields."

**Development
of
Margherita,** This view was accepted by the Government of India and the Secretary of State; and in July 1881, a lease was issued to Messrs. Shaw Finlayson and Company, for not more than 30 square miles in the Makum coal fields. The term of the lease was 20 years, and rent was charged at the rate of Rs. 50 per square mile, merging into a royalty of 3 annas per ton of coal quarried. A branch line was constructed connecting the collieries with the Dibru-Sadiya railway, and thus with the Brahmaputra, and work was begun on an extensive scale. In 1903, a lease for thirty years, on terms similar to those laid down in the original indenture, was granted to the Company for four square miles of land.

The result of a more liberal policy and of the enterprise of British capitalists, has been unusually gratifying. A quarter of a century ago, the hills near Margherita, and a belt of country at their feet from fifteen to twenty miles in width, were clothed with dense tree forest, the home of nothing more interesting and useful than wild beasts. Much of this forest still remains, and on either side of the railway between Makum Junction and Powai, there is hardly anything but dense tree jungle to be seen. But on the banks of the Dihing an extra-

ordinary change has taken place. The forest has been felled, the Makum garden has been put out with nearly 2,000 acres of the finest tea, a flourishing bazar has been established, and even the ubiquitous kaiya is to be found, eager here as everywhere to buy and sell. Columns of smoke curl up into the air from the saw mills and the railway workshops, and the lower hills are dotted with fine bungalows, surrounded with trim lawns and gardens. Coolies who have served in the mines, or on the tea plantation, have settled down and begun to cultivate the land, and where formerly there was a howling wilderness, there are now fields of sugarcane and rice.

The Dihing is spanned by a massive iron girder bridge, over two hundred yards in length, supported on brick pillars, and the view of the settlement from the further bank is charming, both to the lover of the picturesque and to the devotee of material progress. In the near foreground, the station is shut in by a wall of noble trees, while close behind, the hills rise in sharp serrated ridges, their sides and summits alike crowned with dense tropical forest. In front flows the Dihing, a considerable river at all seasons of the year, and between it and the forest, there is the thriving little settlement. The smoke and sounds, which are so irksome in a manufacturing town in England, here, but serve to remind the visitor of the conquest of natural obstacles, and of the kindly works of man in the midst of these primeval jungles. To the east again, the view is bounded by higher hills, whose snow crowned summits stand out in all their vivid purity in the clear air.

**The
collieries.**

The collieries are situated in a line along the lower hills about four miles south of Margherita. In the Namdang grant, the coal can be seen in a solid cliff over one hundred feet in height, the very thickness of the seam rendering it somewhat difficult to work. At Tikak, a short distance further on, coal is quarried near the summit of the hill, and further on again, there are the Ledo Valley, and Upper Ledo collieries. Work was begun at the Tikak, Upper Ledo, and Ledo Valley mines in 1882, and on the Namdang, and Tirap grants, which formerly belonged to Mr. Haly, and which pay a small dead rent in place of royalty, in 1897 and 1898. The coolies employed in the mines are housed in lines in close proximity to their work, but in this direction there has at present been little extension of cultivation. The land they say is 'sour,' and men, who have served their time, prefer to settle down near Margherita. For colliery work there is no local labour available, and coolies have to be brought at great expense from other parts of India. At first, as was only natural, the settlement was far from healthy, and the death rate was considerable. But the gradual extension of the clearings, and the elaborate precautions taken to safeguard the labourers' health, have borne good effects, and at the present day the mortality is not unusually high. In 1903, there were 1,200 coolies working in the mines under the supervision of nine Europeans, and the total output was 239,000 tons of coal. The coal is fairly hard and compact, but after extraction and exposure to the air, it breaks up into small pieces, owing to lamination and jointing. It cakes

freely, and is an excellent coal for steaming purposes, and also makes a very good coke. Very little goes to Calcutta, but it supplies all the wants of the steamer companies, a large number of tea gardens in both the Assam and Surma Valleys, and the Assam Bengal and Dacca Mymensingh Railways. Narayanganj also takes a large quantity of coal. The mines, it should be added, are worked on the square or panel system, a modification of what is known in England as the pillar and stall. The capital actually invested in the collieries is about £360,000 ; but the collieries are only one of the undertakings managed by the Assam Railways and Trading Company, which has a total called up capital of about £1,000,000.

The existence of petroleum in Upper Assam was discovered as long ago as 1828, by Lieutenant Wilcox and Mr. C. A. Bruce ; and in 1837, Major White, reported that he had found several oil springs on the Namrup river. The first lease of oil bearing strata was given to Mr. Wagentriber, a tea planter of the Lakhimpur district, who, in 1854, was granted certain rights over the oil springs at Makum, and at Bapu Pung in the neighbourhood. No steps were taken by this gentlemen to develop his property, and on the expiry of his lease, a concession was granted to Mr. Goodenough, of the firm of McKillop, Stewart, and Company to bore for oil over an area of about 700 square miles, between the Buri and Noa Dihings. The area covered by the concession was sufficiently extensive, but the rights conferred were not exclusive, and permission was reserved for other

oil.

persons to bore for oil, provided that they did not do so within one mile of works set up by Mr Goodenough and kept in actual operation. Borings were begun at Nahor Pung and Makum, and plant valued at about half a lakh of rupees, was set up near the wells; but unfortunately Mr. Goodenough died very shortly after the inception of the operations, and work was then discontinued.

**Formation
of the Assam
Oil Company**

Subsequently certain rights were granted to Messrs. Balmer Laurie and Company, to a syndicate of private gentlemen, and to the Assam Railways and Trading Company, a company who have done so much to exploit the mineral resources of the district. Borings were made, considerable sums of money were expended, and small refineries of an experimental character were erected by the Assam Railways and Trading Company, at first at Digboi in 1893, and later on at Margherita in 1896. In 1900, a company with a capital of £310,000 was formed with the object of taking over the oil concessions and plant of the syndicate and of the Assam Railways and Trading Company, and of developing the industry in a really satisfactory manner. It was found that the wells near Digboi yielded the most favourable results, and it was decided to erect a refinery in their immediate neighbourhood. Digboi at that time was nothing more than a desolate and unhealthy forest. Apart from the wells and railway line, there were no signs of human habitation or the handiwork of man, and on every side stretched mile upon mile of pathless jungle. A large refinery was

erected near the oil bearing strata, the forest in the neighbourhood was felled, and the transformation of a dense unwholesome jungle into a thriving settlement, which has been so successfully carried out at Margherita, is now to be seen in progress at Digboi. The lower hills are crowned with the bungalows of the European staff, and the smoke pouring from the chimneys of the refinery, and all the hum and bustle of the factory, seem curiously out of place in the middle of these solitudes.

The oil is found in three layers or stratas, the first between 500 and 600 feet below the surface, the second at about 1,000 feet, and the third at from 1,300 to 1,500 feet. Over each well stands a huge derrick, some sixty feet in height, its gaunt sides covered with the leaves of the tokow plant (*livistonia jenkinsonia*), the whole structure, leaves and all, being of a dreary greasy black, the results of the spouting of the oil. The topmost lengths of steel casing put down the wells are as much as fourteen inches in diameter, but as the well progresses they gradually decrease in size, till at the bottom they are often not more than four and a half inches wide. From the top of the wells, long metal pipes lead to a central tank, creeping across the inequalities of the hills like monstrous snakes, and finally rearing their heads against the iron wall of the tank, to vomit their contents into the seething mass below. Vomit is a literal description of the way in which they discharge themselves of their burden, which come rushing out in short bursts and gasps, a curious

The raw
material.



pitchy mass like greenish mud, dusted over with a red powder from the condensing gas. There are altogether twenty-two wells near Digboi, but some five or six have been abandoned as they were not sunk to a sufficient depth. The deepest well goes down no less than 1865 feet, but does not yield as much oil as some that are little more than half as deep.

**System of
manufacture**

The crude oil is conveyed by pipes into two huge storage tanks, each of which contains some 60,000 gallons, and is then subjected to various processes of distillation. The vapour that comes off from the first boiler condenses into oil which contains naphtha and petrol, and the residue passes by gravitation into a second boiler. The vapour that comes off from the second boiler condenses into an impure form of kerosine (a), and the residue is carried to a pot still which is gradually heated till it becomes red hot. The vapour which is given off during this process condenses into a heavy oil containing paraffin wax (b), while the residue bakes into a hard coke, which is broken up and removed from the still after it has cooled. The impure kerosine (a) is then mixed with the heavy oil (b), and the product is treated with sulphuric acid and caustic soda and redistilled. The vapour that comes off condenses into kerosine oil, which, after being again treated with sulphuric acid and caustic soda, is ready for use, while the residue is heated in a pot still till it gives off a heavy oil containing wax. This oil is then passed through huge drums with a refrigerating chamber in the centre, and the cold causes the wax to crystallize, so that the oil

and wax leave the drums in a sort of buttery mass. This semi solid product is then forced through layer after layer of cloth which collects the wax and allows the oil to run off. The oil is then treated with sulphuric acid and caustic soda, and redistilled. The first vapour to come off is a light burning oil which is mixed with the impure kerosine (a), the second product is an intermediate or fuel oil containing paraffin, the third a lubricating oil. The lubricating oil is still, however, carrying too much wax, so once more it is passed through the refrigerating drums and layers of cloth, and it is only then, after it has been concentrated to remove the higher oils, that it is fit for use.

The wax is sweated in steam chambers to remove the oil and part of the colouring matter, mixed with animal black, boiled, passed through presses to still further clean it, and then cooled in trays. Part of it is shipped to England thus in bulk, and part is manufactured into candles. The total output in 1903, was 63 tons of candles, 573 tons of paraffin wax and 1,200,000 gallons of kerosine oil. Nearly all of the oil is sold locally in Assam or in the neighbouring districts of Bengal. A list of the different places, in which oil had at that time been found, is given in a paper published in 1876, in the memoirs of the Geological Survey of India Vol. XII Part 2 page 89.

Clay iron stones occur in the coal measures, and as much as 40 per cent. of iron, has been found in a sample obtained from the neighbourhood of Tirugao in Sibsagar. According to Mr. Mallet, there is a large quantity

Iron.

of ore scattered through the measures, and enough could be procured to keep any number of native furnaces going. It is, however, more than doubtful whether the supply obtained in any one locality would be sufficient to feed an English blast furnace.* Under native rule there was a considerable iron industry in Upper Assam. But according to Colonel Hannay, the workers, who numbered about 8,000 during the zenith of the Ahom power, did not exceed 100 after the Burmese invasion; and iron smelting is, at present, a lost art in Lakhimpur. Specimens of iron pyrites have been obtained from the Mishmi Hills, but inaccessibility, lack of labour, and the uncivilized character of the hill men render it quite impossible to work these deposits.

Gold.
Native
methods.

Gold dust is found in the Brahmaputra and its tributaries, and under Ahom rule certain communities were compelled to furnish the Raja with this precious metal. The amount obtained is said to have been considerable, and Rajeswar Singh (1751-1769. A. D.) is reported to have taken as much as 2,500 oz. of gold every year from the people of Upper Assam.†

The following system was usually employed. The gold washers selected a gravelly shore opposite to a falling bank, where the current flowed fast round a corner. The stream was diverted over the selected spot, till the surface sand had been washed away and the gravelly strata exposed, and was then turned back into its

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India. Vol XII, Pt. 2, P. 93.

† J. A. S. B. Vol 7. P. 621. It is from this source that the following description of the system employed by the gold washers has been taken.

former channel. The auriferous sand was thrown on to a bamboo strainer placed over a wooden trough, and water was poured over it, the trough being tilted at a slight angle, so that the water and lighter substances ran off, while the gold and the heavier matter remained at the bottom. When a sufficient quantity of this matter had been collected, it was placed in another vessel, and quicksilver added to attract the grains of gold. The mixture of quicksilver and gold was then put in a shell and placed on a fire. The shell was converted into lime, the quicksilver evaporated, and the gold was left lying in the lime. The lime and gold were then thrown into a vessel full of water, when the precious metal at once sank to the bottom.

In 1852, Capt Dalton reported that the sands of the Sisi river were highly auriferous. Twenty grains of gold was not an unusual return on one day's labour by three men, who between them could wash about a ton of rubble; and 11 grains were extracted from 22 cwt of gravel in his presence. This report was confirmed by Mr. C. C. Campbell, who declared that the yield was considerable, though the profits were absorbed by the purchaser of the gold mahal, and the people who advanced the capital to the actual washers.* In 1882 a ten years lease was granted to a European of the right to wash for gold in the Subansiri and its tributaries. It was hoped that he would make some attempt to ascertain the source from which the precious metal was

European
investiga-
tions-

* Note recorded by Mr. T. G. Murray in 1877. R. A. Progs. August 1893' Nos 46-74,

derived, and the possibilities of developing the industry ; but nothing of the kind was done, and an application for the renewal of the lease was summarily rejected. In 1894, a syndicate was formed, and a considerable sum expended in the exploration of the rivers of Lakhimpur. But gold was not found any where in paying quantities and no return was obtained on the capital expended. In 1901, a prospecting license was issued to Messrs Winsland and Sutton, for a portion of the Subansiri, but, on receiving unfavourable reports from a mining engineer on the prospects of dredging in that river, they resigned their license in the following year.

**Mr.
Maclaren's
report.**

In the cold season of 1903-04, the auriferous rivers of Assam were regularly examined by Mr. Maclaren of the Geological survey of India.* He visited the Buri Dihing, the Junglu Pani, a small stream which rises in the Tipam Hills and falls into the Dihing about eight miles below Margherita, the Tengapani, the Brahmaputra above Sadiya, the Dibang, the Dihang, and the Subansiri. In every one of these rivers gold was found, but in the great majority of cases the quantity was insignificant, and was seldom as much as one grain to a ton of gravel. The best results were obtained at the Dirpai bar on the Subansiri, at Gurimara near Chunpura on the Brahmaputra, and at Sibiyamukh on the Dihang. Neither of the two latter places was, however, thoroughly examined.

At Dirpai no less than $7\frac{1}{2}$ dwt. of gold were obtained

* His report will be found in the memoirs of the Geological Survey of India Vol. XXXI, Pt. 4.

from about $8\frac{1}{2}$ tons of sand; but with proper appliances the yield would probably have been about 10 dwts or 28 grains from every 23 cwt. of sand. This was considered by Mr. Maclaren to be a payable yield of precious metal, and the nature of the gravel offers no serious hindrance to successful dredging. On the other hand it must be borne in mind that operations cannot be carried on when the river rises in the rains, that the extent and depth of the deposit are unknown, and that it is doubtful whether the supply of gold, deposited each year when the river rises, would equal the amount removed during the previous season's operations. The Assam gold is of a fine quality, and the evil reputation it enjoyed in the days of native rule seems to have been due to the admixture of an excessive proportion of alloy. The grains are extremely small, and the gold was in all probability originally derived from the quartz veins of the metamorphic and gneissic schists of the higher ranges. From here it was washed into the Tipam or Sub-Himalayan sandstones, which were probably deposited by a river system not greatly dissimilar in direction from that at present in existence.

Boulders of limestone are found in the bed of the Digaru, a river which falls into the Brahmaputra about 20 miles north east of Sadiya. The stone is brought down the Digaru when the river is in spate, and to judge from it's rounded appearance, must have come from a considerable distance. Some sixty or seventy thousand maunds are collected every year, but the difficulty of transit up and down the Brahmaputra is a

Lime, kaolin
salt

serious obstacle to the development of the trade. A thick deposit of kaolin resting upon white quartz occurs near the Brahmakund, and salt springs are found in the coal bearing strata, but are very little used.

**Manu-
factures.**

The indigenous industries of Lakhimpur are not of much importance. Several hundred Europeans and many thousand natives obtain a living from the cultivation of the tea bush, and large sums of money are annually paid in England as interest on the capital invested in the undertaking. This industry is, however, almost entirely supported by British capital, and for every acre of tea in the district held by a native of the country, there are forty owned and managed by Europeans. The coal mines and oil wells, to which reference has been already made, are striking instances of the way in which wealth can be extracted from the very midst of the jungles; but, as far as the natives of the district are concerned, these valuable deposits would have remained untouched till the crack of doom. The saw mills, the brick and pottery works at Margherita, and the railway work shops at Dibrugarh are all the creations of European enterprise; and the indigenous arts and industries are, if any thing, even less important than they are in the other districts of the Assam Valley. They consist of the rearing of silk worms, the weaving of cotton cloth on the hand loom, and the manufacture of rough pottery, daos and knives, and brass and bell-metal utensils. A brief account of these cottage industries, and of the fisheries of the district is given in the following paragraphs.

Pat Silk.

Three different kinds of silk are produced in the

district. The most valuable kind is known as *pat*, and is obtained from the cocoon of two species of worms, the univoltine or *bor polu*. (*bombyx textor*) and the multivoltine or *horu polu* (*bombyx croesi*) but only the former worm is reared in Lakhimpur. Both kinds are reared indoors, on the leaves of the mulberry tree, (*morus indica*.) The eggs of the *bor polu* take ten months to hatch, the worms usually making their appearance about the beginning of January. The life of the worm lasts from thirty to forty days and the cocoon takes about six days to spin. The cocoons are of a bright yellow colour, but the silk, when boiled in potash water, becomes perfectly white. From twelve to fifteen thousand cocoons are required to yield one pound of thread, which is worth about Rs. 12. The *pat* worm is considered impure and is only reared by Katanis. The total annual out put of the district is said to be some 12 seers of thread, which is spun in the Madarkhat mauza.

The *muga* worm (*antheroea assamoea*) is generally fed on the *sum* tree (*machilus odoratissima*.) Five different broods are distinguished by vernacular names, but the only broods commonly reared in Lakhimpur, are the *jarua* in December-February, and the *jethua* in the spring; the latter being by far the more important of the two. The complete cycle of the insect lasts from 54 to 81 days, the bulk of which is occupied by the life of the worm. When the moths hatch out, the females are at once attached to straws which are hung up inside the house, and are visited by the males, who are allowed to remain free for three or four days

Muga.

Each female produces about 250 eggs which are placed in a dark place, and when the worms appear they are at once transferred to the *sum* tree. A band of straw or plaintain leaves is fastened round the trunk, to prevent them from descending, and during the night they take shelter under the leaves. Constant vigilance is, however, required to keep off crows, kites, owls, large bats, and other pests which prey upon the worm, and hail and heavy rain not unfrequently do damage. When fully grown, the worm is about 5 inches long and nearly as thick as the fore finger. In colour it is green, with a brown and yellow stripe extending down each side, while red moles with bright gold bases are dotted about the surface of the body. When the worms are ready to spin, they descend the tree and are then removed to the house. Most Assamese women possess one or more garments of *muga* silk, and well-to-do men wear waist cloths of this material on occasions of ceremony. *Muga* silk is chiefly manufactured for home use, and very little is produced for sale. The principal centres of cultivation are the mauzas situated on the north bank of the Brahmaputra. The silk is reeled from the cocoon, 250 of them yielding one ounce, of thread. The price obtained is from Rs. 6 to 12, per seer.

Eri silk.

The *eri* worm (*attacus ricini*) derives its name from the *eri* or castor oil plant (*ricinus communis*) on which it is usually fed. Patches of this plant are to be seen in the gardens of most villagers, and the worm is proportionately common. From five to six broods are usually reared in the year; those which

spin their cocoons in November, February, and May yielding most silk. As with the *muga* moth, the females, when they emerge, are tied to pieces of reed, and are visited by the males who are left at liberty. The eggs are hatched in the house and take from a week to fifteen days to mature. As soon as the worms appear they are placed on a tray, which is suspended in a place of safety, and fed on the leaves of the castor oil plant. When fully grown, they are about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long and of a dirty white or green colour. After the final moulting, the worms are transferred from the tray to forked twigs suspended across a piece of reed, and, when they are ready to spin, are placed on a bundle of dried plantain leaves or withered branches which is hung from the roof of the hut. The matrix of the cocoon is very gummy, and the silk, which is of a dirty white colour, has to be spun not reeled off. Before this is done, the cocoons are softened by boiling them in water and a solution of alkali. Empty cocoons yield about three quarters of their weight in thread. Eri silk is produced in almost every village, but the thread is required for home use and very little is sold. The Borborua hát, seven miles west of Dibrugarh, is the chief centre of such trade as there is in this product.

The most useful garment made of *eri* silk is the *bor kapor*, a large sheet sometimes as much as 20 feet in length by 5 feet wide, which is folded and used as a wrap in the cold weather. It costs from Rs. 10 to Rs. 16. *Eri* cloth is also made into coats and petticoats.

Cost of silk
clothes.

Women's clothes, both petticoats and the shawls worn over the bust, are however usually made of *muga* silk, the thread required for a complete dress costing from Rs. 5 to Rs. 7.

Pottery.

Very little pottery is made in Lakhimpur, and in 1901 there were less than 200 persons in the district supported by the making and selling of earthenware vessels. The earth used is generally a glutinous clay, which is well moistened with water and freed from all extraneous substances. If it is too stiff some clean coarse sand is worked up with it. A well kneaded lump of clay is then placed on the wheel, which is fixed horizontally and made to rotate rapidly. As the wheel revolves, the potter works the clay with his fingers and gives it the desired shape. The vessel is then sun dried, placed in a mould, and beaten into final shape with a mallet, a smooth stone being held the while against the inner surface. It is then again sun dried, the surface is polished, and it is ready for the kiln. The collection of the clay and firewood, the shaping of the utensils on the wheel and the stacking of them in the kiln, form the men's portion of the work. The women do the polishing and the final shaping. The Hiras, however, do not use the wheel, but mould the vessel on a board, laying on the clay in strips, and the whole of this work is entrusted to the women.

The instruments employed are the wheel (*chak*) which is about three feet in diameter, and rotates on a

piece of hard pointed wood fixed firmly in the ground, the mould (*athali*), a hollow basin about 60 inches long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, the mallet (*baliya piteni*) and the polisher (*chaki*.)

The principal articles manufactured are cooking pots (*charu*) cups (*mola*) water jars (*kalah*, *tekeli* and *thali*) and larger vessels (*hari* and *janga*) with lamps, pipes and drums. The profits of the business are said to be small, and the local pottery is being gradually ousted by a superior quality of goods imported from Bengal, and by metal utensils which are coming extensively into use. The principal centres of the industry are at Dibrugarh, Madarkhat, Margherita, Tinsukia, and Chabua.

The brass and metal industry is not of much importance. Its principal centres are at Japaragaon, Tekelasing, Bokalmajgaon, Japi Hojia, Ghorbund, and Jarwa, but the number of craftsmen, all of whom are Morias, is very small. Bell metal utensils are cast in moulds, but brass vessels are made out of thin sheets of that metal which are beaten out and pieced together. The implements of the trade consist of anvils of different sizes (*belmuri chatuli*) hammers, pincers, and chisels. The furnace is simply a hollow in the floor of the hut, and the bellows are made of goat's skin. When it is desired to join two sheets of brass together, nicks are cut in one edge, into which the other edge is fitted, and the two are then beaten flat. A rough paste made of borax and *pan*, a substance which consists of three parts of sheet brass with one part of solder, is then

Brass and
Bell-metal.

smeared over the join. The metal is heated, the *pan* melts, and the union is complete. The principal articles manufactured are small flattish bowls often used as drinking cups (*lota*,) jars for holding water (*kalsi*, *gagari*,) trays (*sarai*) boxes to carry lime (*temi*,) and large vessels used for boiling rice (*thali* and *hata*.) Daos and knives are also manufactured here and there by blacksmiths, who are either foreigners, or, if they are natives of Assam, only follow this profession after the harvest has been reaped, when their fields do not demand their personal attention.

Weaving. Amongst the Assamese the weaving of cotton cloths is carried on by rich and poor alike, and a loom is generally to be seen in the courtyard of the house. Though cotton is grown in the hills of the Province, and though many different dyes are to be found growing in its forests, the material employed is almost invariably imported yarn, which is obtained in the requisite shades from the village shop. The loom consists of four stout posts, which are driven into the ground so as to make a rectangle about 5' 10" $\times$ 2' 6", and are joined together at the top by cross beams. The object of the loom is three-fold. First it has to support the warp horizontally at a moderate tension, secondly it has to hold the frame containing the reed suspended in such a position that it can readily be driven backwards and forwards to consolidate the weft, and thirdly it has to supply an arrangement to work the healds which raise and lower the threads of the warp. The implements required for the conversion of raw cotton into cloth, and the system

of manufacture followed, are described in the minutest detail in a " Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam " published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are at their best unsatisfactory, and are hardly intelligible without a series of diagrams. Those curious on the subject would do well to consult this monograph, in which the whole subject is discussed with an elaboration and detail, which would be quite unsuitable in a gazetteer. The total cost of the whole apparatus is about ten rupees, and, as weaving only occupies the leisure moments of the women, the use of home made clothing helps to save the pocket of the villager. Very little cotton cloth is prepared for sale, and there can be little doubt that weaving, as an industry, is commercially a failure; the price obtained for the finished article being out of all proportion to the time expended on its production. The principal articles made are *churias* or waist cloths, large sheets or shawls worn as wraps, called *chadar*, or *bor kapor*, and smaller shawls, called *chelengs*. A kind of shawl called *paridia kapor* is very finely made, and is enriched with a beautifully embroidered border. It costs sometimes as much as Rs. 200. Amongst the indigenous inhabitants, the clothing of the women used originally to be always made at home, and consisted of a plain petticoat (*mekhla*) and a species of scarf (*riha*) worn over the bust. Imported goods are, however, beginning to oust the home made fabrics, and the loom is gradually falling into disfavour.

The fishing industry.

All classes of persons catch fish for their own consumption, but the Doms or Nadiyals are the only caste who will consent to catch it for sale. The most important fisheries in the sadr sub-division are the Brahmaputra, Dihing, Dibru, Sesa, and Bari Suti rivers, and the Gharukuti *bhil* in the Dibrugarh mauza, the Larua, Chaparu, and Kawaimari *bhils* in the Jamira mauza, and the Romai *bhil* in Madarkhat. In North Lakimpur the chief fisheries are the Luhit, Charikaria, Ghagor, Ranganadi and Khatali, but none of them are of very great importance, and the total revenue realized from fisheries in the district is, as a rule, only about Rs. 8,000 per annum. Fresh fish is exported from Dibrugarh to Dum Duma and other places on the line of railway, but no attempt is made to salt or dry it. The kinds which are most esteemed for the table are the roe (*labeo rohita*) the chital (*notopterus chitala*), the mahseer (*barbus tor*) the ari (*arius*), the magur (*clarias magur*), the pufta (*callichrous bimaculatus*) and the sol.

The following are the nets most commonly in use. (1) *Ghakata*, a net in the shape of a shovel which is pushed through the water, and is generally used to catch *butchua* fish, (2) *khewali*, a piece of netting to the centre of which a rope is attached while all round the edges there are weights. The net is thrown flat on to the surface of the water, when the weights sink and drag the sides of the net together, and the fish are entangled in pockets along the edges. It is then drawn by the rope to a boat or bank. The following names are applied to this net as the mesh decreases

in size, *sayani*, *pachani*, *afalia*, *angtha*, *ghanjal*. (3) *langi*, a large net which is stretched right across a river, the bottom being weighted and the top buoyed. The fish are then driven towards the net and become entangled in its meshes. The *tenga langi* is a smaller variety, the two ends of which are brought round to form a circle, as the net is not long enough to reach across the river. (4) *parangi*, a square net, the opposite corners of which are fastened to flexible bamboos. The net thus hangs like a sack from a stout pole to which the bamboos are attached, and is lowered into the water and raised at intervals. The villagers also fish in shallow water with wicker traps *polo* and *jokai*, and place other traps (*sefa* and *gui*) which are worked on much the same principle as the lobster pot, in running streams.

The right to fish in each of the larger fisheries is every year put up to auction. The purchaser of the fishery finds the task of realizing his dues much simplified by the fact that the Nadiyals are the only caste who fish for sale. Private persons are supposed to pay him a small fee for catching fish for their own consumption, but in practice, this is seldom realized. The mahaldar knows who will fish in the length of river purchased by him, and distributes the auction price of the fishery rateably over each adult fisherman, charging him in addition one or two rupees to cover the cost of collection, and as interest on the payment made to Government, before the full value of the fishery has been realized. Sometimes the same principle is followed in the case of *bhils*, sometimes the fishermen keep

accounts of the value of the fish sold and one-eighth of the gross receipts is taken by the mahaldar; a proportion which does not seem excessive, as he is responsible for any loss which may accrue. The fact that the mahaldar is always a Nadiyal of local influence, and that he only has to deal with his fellow caste men, has much to do with the harmonious working of the system.

CHAPTER VII.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF PEOPLE—COMMUNICATIONS—TRADE—TOWNS—LOCAL BOARDS.

Rent—Wages—Prices—Food and dress—Dwellings—Condition of people—Social restriction—Isolation of Assam—Development of steam navigation—Railways—Roads—Water communications—Post and telegraph—Trade—Towns—Local Boards.

The area of Government waste available for settlement in Lakhimpur is very large, the area of land held by native landlords free of revenue, or at half rates, is extremely small, and as a natural consequence, the great majority of the cultivators hold direct from Government.

Rent.

Statistics of subtenancy were compiled in 1899–1900 and are summarised in the following abstract:—

Name of subdivision.	Total settled area for which returns were compiled.	Total area sublet.	Area paying produce rents.	Area paying cash rents.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Dibrugarh ...	120,405	2,659	34	2,625
North Lakhimpur ...	29,956	1,159	31	1,128
Total ...	150,361	3,818	65	3,753

It will be seen that only two per cent. of the area for which statistics were collected in Dibrugarh, and four

per cent. of the area in North Lakhimpur was held by tenants; and that the amount of land held on condition that the tenant should make over half the produce to the landlord (*adhi*.) was absolutely inconsiderable.

Though the area sublet is comparatively small, the rents charged are for Assam fairly high. As much as Rs. 9 per acre is sometimes paid for rice land, and about half the land sublet pays a rent of Rs. 6 per acre, or fully twice the Government revenue. This is due to the fact that Lakhimpur is to some extent an industrial district, so that land near Dibrugarh or the great tea centres acquires a special value. Coolies who have saved a little money often like to settle down near the estate on which they were employed, so that they can still earn wages during the time when they are not actively engaged in their own fields. For people of this class, it is more economical to rent land and pay the landlords profit, than to move to the Government wastes in the remoter portions of the district.

About one third of the land sublet was held by persons who only paid the Government revenue; but these tenants, as a rule, render small services to their landlords, who otherwise would derive but little benefit from the arrangement. Low land on tea estates is generally let out to coolies for cultivation, but such persons would not be returned as tenants either in the revenue or census tables. The last decade witnessed a large increase in the number of tenants, the figure having risen from 1592 in 1891 to 6094 in 1901, but there is nothing in this fact to cause anxiety. There is land enough and

to spare for all, and if a person wishes to occupy a piece of land in a favourable situation, that has been already taken up, it is only right that he should pay for it.

The proportion of gentle folk who are unable to cultivate with their own hands is small, the number of ex-garden coolies who are not too proud to labour is considerable, and the difficulty of obtaining men to plough or reap the harvest is not as great as in some of the other districts of Assam. It must not, however, be supposed from this, that labour is either cheap or plentiful. Most of the local revenue officials agree in saying that it is still difficult to get labour, and this is the view of the Deputy Commissioner, who writes as follows on the subject. "My experience is that it is just as difficult to get Assamese to work in Lakhimpur as in other districts of Assam. The ex-garden cooly, unless tempted by high wages, at a time entirely in accord with his own convenience, will not usually work away from the immediate surroundings of his old estate. The rate of wages usually demanded, i.e., six annas per diem does not command even a limited supply of regular labour." The general rate of wages seems to be from six to eight annas per diem, though in North Lakhimpur, and in the mauzas on either side of the railway line, between Rohmoria and Rangagora, the rate is lower, and unskilled labour can be obtained for four or five annas a day. Servants are not generally hired by the month, but when they are, receive from Rs. 3 to Rs. 7 in cash in addition to their food. In the south of the district, Nagas will sometimes undertake

Wages

to work for hire. Elsewhere the labouring classes are recruited from the cooly immigrants or from Assamese impoverished by the abuse of opium. The wages of carpenters are said to range from 10 annas to 2 rupees a day, masons get from 8 annas to one rupee, while blacksmiths are paid from 10 annas to Re. 1-8-0. Nearly all these artizans are foreigners, as the Assamese display no aptitude for the handicrafts.

Prices.

The statement in the margin shows the average price of rice in each of the four decades ending with 1902. It is many years since the cultivators of Lakhimpur produced enough grain to feed the immigrant population, and the price of rice depends on the price at which it can be imported from outside. During the last forty years, it has shewn a general tendency to appreciation, but this tendency is not so marked as in other districts, for the simple reason that even forty years ago rice in Lakhimpur was far from cheap.* For the same reason the market keeps extremely steady, and during that period there was only a difference of 7 seers between top and bottom prices, as compared with a difference of 29 seers in Sylhet. Salt has been fairly steady at 8 seers for the rupee, which is considerably cheaper than it was in the sixties, when only 6 seers could be purchased for that sum, but in 1903 the price fell to 10 seers for the rupee. The price of pulse will be found in Table X.

Average.	Seers per Rupee.
1863-1872 ...	14'2
1873-1882 ...	11'1
1883-1892 ...	12'7
1893-1902 ...	10'7

*. 1863. Seers of rice per Rupee : Sylhet and Cachar 32, Goalpara 25, Kamrup 23, Lakhimpur 15.

The staple food of the people is boiled rice, eaten with pulse, spices, and fish or vegetable curry. Amongst the well-to-do, pigeon or duck occasionally take the place of fish, but fish is a very common article of diet, and is said to be a substitute for *ghi*, which is not very largely used by the indigenous inhabitants. Goat's flesh is eaten by Muhammadans and members of the Saktist sect, and venison is always acceptable, and is frequently procurable, especially in times of flood, when the deer are driven on to islets of higher land, and are ruthlessly slaughtered from boats. Tea drinking is very common, especially in the early morning. Sweetmeats usually consist of powdered grain mixed with milk, sugar, and *ghi*. The ordinary form of dress for a villager is a cotton *dhoti* or waistcloth, with a big shawl or wrapper, and sometimes a cotton coat or waistcoat. Women wear a petticoat, a scarf tied round the bust, and a shawl. Amongst the Assamese these cloths used formerly to be made at home, and in the case of the women, and of the large wraps worn in the cold weather by men, are frequently of silk. The actual cost to the family of cotton cloths is very small, but the silken wraps of the well-to-do are often beautifully embroidered, and the finest shawls are sometimes worth as much as Rs. 200. Foreigners wear cheap imported cotton *dhotis* and *saris*, blankets, and ready made coats, and the use of these articles of clothing is spreading amongst the Assamese. This change of fashion is unfortunately accompanied by a tendency to neglect the cottage loom, and in places the village women are beginning to forget the weaver's

art. This is to be regretted, as the time that was formerly spent on weaving is not now employed on any other profitable occupation. A curious article of dress worn by the Assamese is a large flat hat, called *jhapi*, which serves as a protection against the sun and rain, and is made of leaves and split bamboo, and decorated with coloured cloth. These hats are circular in shape, and range from two to six feet in diameter, but those of the larger size are more often carried than worn. Boots and shoes are the exception, and, in their own homes, even well-to-do people wear wooden clogs. Wooden sandals are also used by villagers, when travelling or working in jungle ground, where there are tufts of sharp-pointed grass.

Dwellings. The homestead of the ordinary peasant is generally separated from the village path by a ditch or bank, on which there is often a fence of split bamboo. Inside, there is a patch of beaten earth, which is always kept well swept and clean. Round this tiny courtyard stand two or three small houses almost huts, and in a corner there are generally two open sheds, one of which contains a loom, while the other serves the purpose of a cow-house. The whole premises are surrounded by a dense grove of bamboos, plantains, and arecanut trees, and there are often numerous specimens of the arum family covering the ground. The general effect is picturesque enough, but the presence of all these plants and trees makes the whole place very damp, and excludes all sun and air. At the back there is usually a garden in which vegetables, tobacco, and

other plants are grown. The houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and must be very hot in summer, and as they are built on low mud plinths are extremely damp in rainy weather. The walls are made of reeds plastered with mud, or of split bamboo, the roof of thatch, the rafters and the posts of bamboo. All of these materials can, as a rule, be obtained free of charge, and a house costs the owner nothing but the trouble of erecting it, but in spite of this, they are small and badly built. The houses of the middle class are built on practically the same plan, but they are larger, and wooden posts and beams are often used in place of bamboo. The furniture of the cultivating classes is very simple, and consists of a few boxes, wickerwork stools and baskets, brass and bell-metal utensils, and bottles and earthen pots and pans. The villager's bedding is a quilt made out of old cloths, and he either sleeps on a mat on the damp floor, or on a small bamboo *machan* or platform. The well-to-do have beds, tables, and chairs in their houses, but these articles of luxury are seldom found outside the town. This style of house is common to Bengalis and Assamese, but, in the flooded tracts, there are none of the graceful areca palme, as the tree cannot thrive if the roots remain long under water. These orchards and gardens are a considerable source of wealth to the cultivator, and a house, standing on a bare patch of ground, has always a somewhat poverty stricken appearance to eyes accustomed to the luxuriant vegetation in which the typical Assamese cottage is embedded.

**Economic
condition of
the people.**

The villagers in Lakhimpur are surrounded by all the conditions that make for material prosperity. The soil is fertile and there is abundance of waste land still available for settlement, the rates of revenue are not excessive, the rainfall is certain and abundant, and the public health is good. There is no lack of communications, and, most important of all, the people have a never failing market at their very doors. In 1903-04 nearly 57½ lakhs of rupees were paid away in wages to garden coolies in the sadr subdivision, or Rs. 33 for every man, woman, and child living outside the gardens. A large proportion of this enormous sum came no doubt into the hands of the Marwari merchants, and some is spent on liquor, but the amount that changes hands at the village markets must be considerable. The cooly is ready and willing to buy all that the cultivator will sell, whether of rice, vegetables, molasses, poultry, or live stock; and if the villagers are not well off, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that they themselves must be to blame. A striking feature of these markets is the large proportion of foreign vendors, and of regular shop keepers. Here, as elsewhere, the Assamese are apparently allowing much of the profits of agriculture to slip through their fingers, and instead of taking their own rice to market, they sell to the middle man who makes a large turn on the transaction. The standard of comfort is not very high, but a large proportion of the Assamese population consists of Ahoms, Chutiyas, and the humbler Hindu castes, who have not been richly endowed by nature either with intelligence

or enterprise. There is no accumulation of wealth, and few amongst the Assamese could be described as even moderately well-to-do; but even the local revenue officials admit that there is very little indebtedness in the sadr subdivision.

Opium, no doubt, levies a heavy tax upon the people. In 1900, 374 maunds of opium were issued from the treasury, which must have cost the actual consumers at the shops no less than Rs. 6,75,000; a sum more than a lakh in excess of the total land revenue of the district. A certain proportion of this opium was no doubt taken by the hill tribes, but after making every allowance for this factor, it is obvious that the drug must be a serious drain upon the pockets of the consumers. Opium, moreover, tends to impoverish the people in two ways. The man who is a large consumer of the drug is not only compelled to pay heavily for his pleasure, but its use tends to deprive him of that spring and keenness, which is essential in a people who are to advance far on the path of material progress. In North Lakhimpur, the tea industry is of less importance, and the wages bill in 1903-04, only amounted to a little over five lakhs of rupees. Even this was equivalent to seven rupees per head of the population in the villages, and it is obvious that a large proportion of this money must ultimately find its way into the pockets of the people. The local revenue officials assert that about half the population of the subdivision are in debt, but it seems hardly probable that this can really be the case. If the condition of the people is

actually as bad as is represented, it is difficult to resist the impression that they are themselves responsible. This is practically admitted by one mauzadar, who says that the villagers eat opium and are so weak that they prefer to live by begging to taking work on tea gardens. Some of the villagers undoubtedly are living in a very miserable style, but poverty of this kind is simply due to the idleness and apathy which induce a man to continue living in a miserable cottage instead of taking the trouble to repair it. The rate of interest demanded varies from $37\frac{1}{2}$ to 75 per cent. per annum, the lower rates being charged for loans of Rs. 100 and upwards. In addition to the money they obtain by selling their surplus products to the garden coolies, the peasants add to their resources by taking petty contracts for house building and similar work on tea gardens. Here and there it is said that they will work upon the roads, others again cut cane, while north of the river, *muga* and *eri* silk is sometimes the source from which the revenue is paid.

**Social
restrictions.**

The inhabitants of Lakhimpur are not hampered by many social restrictions with regard to trade, but commerce has but little attraction for them in any of its forms. All castes may of course catch fish, but Doms alone will sell it, though in Sadiya some of the Miris are beginning to do so, to the disgust of the older members of the tribe. All over the district there is a prejudice against paying money or lending rice either on Monday or Wednesdays, and in places Saturday is barred as well. Saturdays and Tuesdays are also

thought to be inauspicious days for building houses or beginning to sow or plough. Similar objections hold good with regard to the day of the new moon, the full moon, and the eleventh day following.

At the time when we first came into possession of the Province, the difficulty of communications proved a most serious obstacle to its development. The Brahmaputra was the great highway which connected this portion of the Company's dominions with Bengal, but the journey up the river for any boat of ordinary size was a very lengthy business. McCosh, writing in 1837, stated that a large boat took from six to seven weeks to come from Calcutta to Gauhati, though the post, which was conveyed in small canoes rowed by two men, who were relieved every fifteen or twenty miles, reached Gauhati in ten days and Bishnath in three days more.* From Gauhati to Dibrugarh it was a month's journey for a "pinnacle," even in the cold weather;† and in the rains against the current the journey took much longer.

Few people presumably had sufficient time or patience to undertake the voyage at that season of the year. Week after week the weary traveller must have pursued his tedious way, his view bounded, as a rule, by high banks of treacherous sand, which then, as now, were continually being undermined by the current, and

* Topography of Assam-page 9 & 82.

† Report on the Province of Assam by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Calcutta 1854, paragraph 82. Butler in his Sketch of Assam puts the journey from Calcutta to Saikhoa in a badgerow *via* Dacca at over nine weeks even in the co'd weather.

falling with a crash into the water. It was only occasionally that he could relieve the monotony of the voyage by a stroll on shore, as through the greater part of its course down the valley, the banks of the river are covered with high reeds and grass, which are quite impenetrable to a man on foot; and the tedium of this dreary voyage of fully three months duration, must have been immense. Canoes, of course, could travel faster against the current, but a canoe is not a vessel in which the ordinary man can journey for many days in comfort.

Beginning of
steam
navigation

This was the state of things for twenty-two years after our annexation of the Valley, but in 1848, the Government steamers were deputed to ply between Calcutta and Gauhati. Three years later, the Commissioner, Major Jenkins, made the not unreasonable proposal that three or four times a year they should be allowed to proceed right up the Valley to Dibrugarh. His suggestions were negatived by the Marine Department, on the ground that the voyages would be financially a failure; but his views were strongly urged on Government by Mr. Mills when he visited the Province in 1853. The proposal met with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor, instructions were issued for the despatch of a steamer in that year, and several voyages were made with results that were not unsatisfactory, even from the financial point of view. The journey from Gauhati to Dibrugarh and back occupied no more than fifteen days, an extraordinary contrast to the interminable delay of the same voyage in a

country boat. The cargo tendered soon exceeded the carrying capacity of the steamers; and in 1855, Lieutenant Colonel Jenkins complained that the vessels reached Gauhati fully laden with goods shipped in Upper Assam, so that Gauhati and the ports below derived practically no advantage from the downward service of the steamers.

As was only to be expected, the rates at first charged were fairly high, and a ticket from Calcutta to Gauhati cost no less than Rs. 150. On the other hand, the accommodation was designed on an extremely liberal scale, as the regulations, issued in 1851, expressly authorised passengers to carry pianos in their cabins free of freight, provided that they were required for use during the voyage and were not in packing cases; a proviso which suggests a very deliberate voyage as compared with the speedier travelling of the twentieth century. Freight on ordinary stores seem to have been charged at the rate of one rupee per cubic foot between Calcutta and Gauhati; but for some time longer a great part of the trade of the Province continued to go by country boat. The planters could never count on being able to despatch their tea by steamer, and were thus compelled to keep up an establishment of country boats, and having got the boats to use them, and the same objection held good in the case of native merchants.* The cost of working the line was heavy, but in spite of this, it showed a fair profit, and it was evident that

* Memorandum by the Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, dated the 7th February 1857.

there would be a great development of the traffic if only facilities were provided for it.

Private
Steamers,
put on the
river.

In 1860, the Indian General Steam Navigation Company entered into a contract to run a pair of vessels every six weeks, provided that the Government boats were taken from the line ; and since that date the steam navigation of the Assam Valley has been in the hands of this Company, and the River Steam Navigation Company, with whom they are associated. But in spite of the existence of a regular service, and the quickening effects of private enterprise, travelling still continued to be very slow. The steamers did not profess to run to scheduled time, the delay at the larger ports for the loading and unloading of cargo was considerable, and the passenger no doubt often required his piano to beguile the tedium of the way. In 1861, the Commissioner, Colonel Hopkinson, was disposed to take a gloomy view of the condition of affairs ; and in a letter to Government openly gave expression to the opinion that it would be better to compensate the planters for any loss they might sustain, and abandon the Province, unless Government were prepared to enter upon a course of vigorous material improvement. In the same letter, he drew the following dreary picture of the isolation of Assam.

“With the furious current of the Brahmaputra, still unconquered by steam, opposing a barrier to all access from without, and not a single road fit for wheeled carriage, or even passable at all for a great portion of the year, there is such an absence of the full tide of life running through Assam, such a want of intercourse between man and man, as does and must result in apathy, stagnation, and torpidity, and a terrible sense

of isolation, by which enterprise is chilled and capital and adventurers scared away. The profits of tea cultivation should attract hundreds where tens now come, but the capitalist is not always to be found who will venture his money in a country to which access is so difficult as it is to Assam, through which his correspondence travels at the rate of a mile and a half an hour, and in which it may take a month to accomplish a journey of two or three hundred miles; nor on the other hand, is it every spirit, however bold, that cares to encounter so dreary a banishment, and to be so entirely cut off from his fellows in a place from which exit is only possible at rare intervals, and must be so literally a prison or tomb to him."

Matters, however, gradually improved, and in 1884, ^{The daily mail service.} a daily service of mail steamers was started between Dibrugarh and Dhubri, connecting with a steamer which plied between the latter place and Jatrapur. Here the traveller who was pressed for time could take the train to Calcutta, though the line was not of the most comfortable, as more than one river had to be crossed in boats before the capital of Bengal was reached.

The introduction of a daily steamer service represented an enormous advance in the facilities for communication between Assam and the outer world. The large steamers were not uncomfortable, but progress was slow, and not only the hour, but the date on which they left any given port was far from certain. The would-be traveller could not choose his own time for starting on his journey, but had to select a date on which a steamer was expected at the nearest ghat; and even then he not unfrequently had to endure a weary period of waiting by the river bank. The daily service changed all that, and combined the advantages of regularity with a speed which, in comparison with that attained by the large

cargo boats, was most commendable. During the rains Dibrugarh was reached on the fifth day after leaving Dhubri, while the downward journey was performed in three days. The navigation of the river is not entirely free from difficulty, the companies were not incited to further efforts by competition, and some years elapsed before any attempt was made to reduce the duration of the voyage. On the completion of the Assam Bengal Railway, the companies realized that it was necessary to accelerate their timing if they were to retain their traffic; and during the rains, steamers now reach Dibrugarh on the fourth day from Dhubri, while the voyage from Dibrugarh to Goalundo only occupies three days, though in the cold weather the journey takes a day longer. A service of fast steamers also plies direct between Dibrugarh and Calcutta *via* the Sundarbans, by which goods can be sent direct without any necessity for handling, and the establishment of a feeder service up to Sadiya is at present under consideration.

**The Assam
Bengal
Railway.**

In 1903, Dibrugarh was supplied with an alternative means of communication with the outside world, by the completion of the Assam Bengal Railway. The line enters the district at mile 556, and meets the Dibrugarh Sadiya Railway at Tinsukia. Passengers can now travel by rail to Gauhati, thence by steamer to Dhubri,* and by rail to Calcutta, or through the North Cachar Hills down the Surma Valley to Chandpur, and thence *via* Goalundo to the capital of Bengal. The latter

* A railway from Golakganj a station on the Eastern Bengal State Railway, near Dhubri to Gauhati, is under construction.

journey can be completed in 57 hours, while the sea at Chittagong can be reached in less than two days ; a marvellous change from the two months of dreary tracking which were necessary only sixty years ago.

The cost of metalling is prohibitive in Lakhimpur, the unmetalled roads are quite incapable of carrying heavy traffic in the rains, and the necessity for providing an outlet for tea and for the coal in the extensive measures at Makum, led to the construction of the Dibru Sadiya Railway in 1885. This line runs from the Brahmaputra near Dibrugarh past Dibrugarh bazar, Lahool, Dikam, Chabua, Panitola, and Tinsukia Junction to Makum Junction, which is 35 mile east of Dibrugarh. Here it divides into two branches. One line turns north and runs past Barhapjan, Hansara, and Dumduma, to Talap, a distance of 16 miles, and will soon be extended to the Brahmaputra at Saikhoa. The main line runs east and then south past Tingrai, Digboi, and Powai to Margherita, 59 miles from Dibrugarh. In 1903, nearly 240,000 tons of coal were carried over this railway, and there is a large traffic in tea, oil, grain, piece goods, and similar commodities.

**The Dibru
Sadiya
Railway.**

In addition to its most convenient railway, Lakhimpur is fairly well supplied with roads. In 1902-03 there were 23 miles of metalled and 723 miles of unmetalled roads, maintained either by the Public Works Department or the Local Boards ; the last named authorities being responsible for about five-sevenths of the total length. Calculated on the total area of the district, this gives about 6 square miles of country for every

**Road
system.**

mile of road, but the advantages enjoyed by the inhabitants of Lakhimpur are greater than these figures would suggest. There are large tracts of country, more especially north of the Brahmaputra and east of the railway line, in which population is extremely sparse and roads are not required; and the part of the district which is south of the river and west of the railway, in which most of the tea gardens are situated, is well supplied with the means of communication. The roads are, as a rule, well bridged, and only the larger rivers are crossed by ferries; but though they are raised above flood level, they are much cut up if heavy traffic passes over them in the rains, as only a very short length has as yet been metalled.

Roads on
the south
bank

The south trunk road enters the district from Sibsagar, $23\frac{1}{2}$ miles west of Dibrugarh, passes through that town, runs along the Dibru Sadiya Railway line as far as Talap, and finally ends at Sadiya 66 miles from Dibrugarh. There are rest houses at Lepetkatta 9 miles, and Dihing 20 miles west of Dibrugarh, while east of that town they are situated at Tinsukia on the 30th mile, Dumduma on the 44th, Talap on the 51st, Saikhoa on the 60th, and Sadiya. From Sadiya there is a fine road running north to the frontier outpost at Bomjur 25 miles away, but it is only required for military and strategic purposes and carries little traffic.

At Lahoal, another important road takes off from the trunk road six miles east of Dibrugarh, and runs through the Madarkhat, Tengakhat and Jaipur mauzas to Jaipur, a total distance of 30 miles. There are rest

houses at Madarkhat 8 miles, and Tengakhat, 18 miles from Dibrugarh, and at Jaipur itself. The rivers are all spanned by permanent bridges, with the exception of the Dihing on the 23rd mile, which is crossed by a ferry.

North of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway, the Rangagora road runs for 26 miles east of Dibrugarh, through the Rohmorla and Bagdang mauzas to Guijan. Branch roads leave it at the 9th and the 24th mile, and connect it with the Dibru-Sadiya road; while from Guijan a road runs south and west a little to the west of Tinsukia and along the Tingrai river, a total distance of 20 miles, and joins the Jaipur road at the 16th mile. From the 26th mile on the Jaipur road, the Horubat Ali runs to Kenduguri 21 miles away, and from Kenduguri the Sologuri Ali runs due west between the Khowang and Jaipur mauzas to the Diroi river, a distance of 21 miles.

These are, however, only the main lines of communication, and they are linked up with one another, and with the various tea gardens near which they pass, by a system of branch roads. There are altogether 12 more regular roads under the management of the Local Board south of the Brahmaputra, with a total length of 55 miles, but none of them are of sufficient importance to merit separate mention. Reference must, however, be made to the Dhodar Ali, a legacy from the Ahom kings, which leaves the trunk road a little to the east of the Dhansiri in the Golaghat subdivision of Sibsagar, and after running through the south of that district, finally ends at Jaipur, only the last eight miles actually lying within the boundaries of the Lākimpur district.

**Roads on
the north
bank**

North of the Brahmaputra, the north trunk road runs from the border of Darrang through the Narayanpur, Laluk, and Nabaichoa mauzas to North Lakhimpur, a distance of 34 miles. Most of the streams are spanned by bamboo or timber bridges, but four miles west of the subdivisional head-quarters station the Ranganadi is crossed by a ferry, and so is the Dikrang 22 miles further west. There is a rest house at this place, and another one at Laluk 14 miles west of North Lakhimpur. The trunk road is now being extended from North Lakhimpur to Dibrugarh. North Lakhimpur itself is connected with the Brahmaputra at Kamalabari by a road 27 miles in length, but only the first 19 miles, *i.e.*, up to the Luhit, lie in the Lakhimpur district. The Luhit is crossed by a ferry near the point where it receives the waters of the Subansiri, and a rest house has been erected on the north bank. There is another rest house on this road, nine miles south of North Lakhimpur.

The most important roads maintained in this subdivision by the Local Board are as follows. Road from North Lakhimpur to Gogamukh 26 miles, with a rest house at Gogaldubi; road from North Lakhimpur to Dhakua-khana 23 miles with rest houses at Dhakua-khana and Bebejia; road from Dhakua-khana to Bardalani about 15 miles due north; and thence another 8 miles to Gogamukh.

Ferries.

The most important ferries are those over the Brahmaputra at Dibrugarh, over the Dihing at Khowang, over the Luhit at Garamur, and over the Dikrang. The right

of managing these ferries and levying tolls at the rates prescribed by Government is put up to auction, and in 1901, those in the sadr subdivision fetched Rs. 3,800 while those in North Lakhimpur were sold for Rs. 1,900. These ferries are generally crossed on *mars* or wooden platforms placed on two canoes arranged side by side.

Till recently, the Brahmaputra was the only means of communication between Lakhimpur and the outside world, and a large part of the trade of the district still enters it and leaves it by that route. The other rivers are not much used for the purposes of commerce, as they do not tap the most productive portions of the district, and in many cases, snags, rapids, and a strong current offer a serious obstacle to traffic. During the cold weather the mail steamers have as a rule to stop a mile or two below Dibrugarh ghat, and above that town, traffic is carried on by country boat; but vessels of four tons burthen can get as far as Sadiya, and even one day's journey further on to Digarumukh, whence they bring down limestone. The great tributaries which join the main river from the north, such as the Dihang, Dibang, Sessleri, and others, come from too wild a tract to carry trade of any great importance. A certain amount of traffic is carried on up and down the Dibru river as far as Dumduma in the rains, but is suspended in the dry season, as there is then very little water in the river. A boat of four tons burthen can go up the Buri Dihing as far as Jaipur in the cold weather, and well above Margherita in the rains. At this season of the year, small feeder steamers sometimes

Water
Communica-
tions.

come up to Jaipur, to carry away the tea manufactured on the estates which are situated in the neighbourhood. A certain amount of traffic also goes on up the Nee Dihing and Tengapani rivers. In the cold weather, a boat of four tons burthen can proceed up the former river as far as Ningru Samon's village, and in the rains can get beyond the Inner Line; but there is very little population on its banks, and consequently not much traffic. The Suhansiri is navigable by large boats, almost up to the frontier of the Province, at all seasons of the year, and small steamers ply twice a week to Badati in the cold weather, and to Bordeobam in the rains. The Ranganadi is also navigable right up to the frontier, by boats of four tons burthen, at all seasons of the year, and small steamers occasionally go up to Pohumara.

**Post and
Telegraph.**

In 1904, there were 35 post and telegraph offices open in the district. The names of these offices will be found in a statement in the appendix.

The following abstract shows what an enormous development of postal business has taken place during the last forty years.

Number of post offices in.		Number of letters and post-cards delivered in thousands omitted.			Number of Savings Banks' accounts in	Balance at the credit of depositors.
1875.	1903-04.	1861-62.	1870-71.	1903-04.	1903-04.	1903-04.
6	35	4	70	877	2,981	Rs. 478,000

The articles exported from the district are few in number, but of considerable value. They consist of tea, which, in 1903, was probably worth even at wholesale prices about £1,000,000, coal, oil, wax and candles, India rubber, cane, tea boxes, and lime. Till recently, all external trade left the district by the Brahmaputra; but a portion, at any rate, of the traffic will now no doubt be diverted to the Assam Bengal Railway, as goods can be sent direct without handling to the sea at Chittagong.

Trade.

The chief imports are rice, of which some six lakhs of maunds were brought up to the district in 1903, pulse and other food grains, cotton thread and cloth, umbrellas, opium, salt, sugar and spices, tobacco, potatoes, mustard oil, *ghi*, beer and spirits, hardware and machinery, and corrugated iron. Practically the whole of the import trade is in the hands of the Marwari merchants, locally known as Kaiyas, who have reaped a rich harvest from the flourishing gardens of the district. There is hardly a plantation without its Kaiya's shop, but these enterprising dealers are not content with the profits derived from civilization. They have established agencies on the very outskirts of the district, where they trade with the hill tribes who bring down chillies, rubber, ivory, wax, madder, and other products of the jungle, which they exchange, generally at very favourable rates, for opium and other goods procurable in their shops. The Kaiya is indeed ubiquitous in Lakhimpur. There is hardly an important village, even in the sparsely populated tracts north of the Brahma-

putra, which has not its shop; and as there is generally no competition, the trader is able to buy from the raiyats, their mustard, surplus *dhan*, or *eri* cloths at exceptionally favourable rates. In the interior of the district, their shops will sometimes be found at some distance from the roads, and boats, and to a smaller extent pack ponies, are used for the removal of the produce collected in their golas. The Kaiya's shop is, in fact, the advanced outpost of civilization, and is to be found even beyond our frontier guards. There are Kaiyas on the Patkai, Kaiyas at Ningru Samons' village on the Noa Dihing, and Kaiyas at Chowkam's village near Mishmighat on the way to the Brahmakund. Their desire for gain drives these peaceful traders, who can have nothing in them of the spirit of the pioneer, into the wildest of jungles and amongst rude and uncivilized people; but as their transactions with the hill tribes are advantageous to both parties, it is seldom that any cause of friction arises.

The principal centre of trade is Dibrugarh where, in addition to the Marwari bazar, there are two large general stores under European management, and a number of shops kept by Muhammadans, who deal in furniture, hardware, crockery, and general haberdashery.

Sadiya is an important centre for the frontier trade, and is a market for lime stone, potatoes, pulses, molasses, wax, ivory, rubber, and musk, the four last articles being brought down by the Abors and Mishmis from beyond the frontier. A very large market is held every Sunday at Dumduma, which is attended by thousands of garden

coolies and villagers. There are also bazars of some importance at Saikhoa, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra opposite to Sadiya, at North Lakhimpur, where trade is carried on with the Miris and Daflas who inhabit the outer ranges of the Himalayas, and at Margherita. At the latter place there is a certain amount of trade with the trans-Patkai tribes, who bring down amber from the Hukong valley, and here is actually to be found a Chinese shop keeper, a fact which emphasises the easterly position of Lakhimpur. Since the completion of the Assam Bengal Railway, Tinsukia has shown some indications of growing into a commercial centre, as it is situated at the junction of two railways and commands all the principal avenues of trade.

There are other villages in which there are two or three small shops which deal in salt, oil, piece-goods, grain, and very often opium, but none of these places are as yet of much importance. This is largely due to the tea industry, which has a very decentralizing effect on trade. Some of the coolies' requirements are supplied by the garden Kaiya, while paddy, poultry, vegetables, and molasses can generally be purchased at the weekly markets held in different portions of the district. The economic development of Lakhimpur is altogether opposed to the growth of towns in the interior. Its principal industry is agricultural, there are no indigenous arts or manufactures to collect the people into small centres of population, and each garden tends to form a unit by itself. Two

statements in the appendix show the names of the villages in which there are three or more permanent shops, and of the places at which markets are held. For the convenience of the coolies these markets are generally held upon a Sunday.

Towns.
Dibrugarh.

The only urban area in the district is Dibrugarh, but Dibrugarh, though not at present the largest, is probably the most prosperous little town in Assam. It is situated on the left bank of the Dibru river a little above the point at which it falls into the Brahmaputra, in 27°28' N and 94°55' E. The western end of the town consists of rows of cottages along the river's bank, inhabited by Nadiyals and other low caste people, which gradually merge into Vetch Street, the great commercial centre. Here there is a daily bazar (Digli Bazar) held near the bank of the river, in which fish, poultry, grain, vegetables, and other supplies can be obtained. There are tailors shops which turn out quantities of cheap ready made clothing, *Dacca beparis* who deal in furniture, spices, stationery, haberdashery and all the miscellaneous goods affected by their class, and the wealthy Kaiyas whose staple stock in trade is grain of all sorts, piece goods, salt, and oil. Of recent years the Dibru has been cutting into this portion of the bazar, and the Kaiyas have begun to move their houses further back towards the railway station. At the end of Vetch Street comes the European quarter. Most of the houses are situated on the red road which runs along the bank of the Dibru river, and from which, on a clear day, a beautiful view can be obtained of the lower ranges of hills and the

snows beyond. Behind this road there are open maidans, on which are situated the cutcherry and other public offices, and the recreation ground. At the back of these maidans are the Graham Bazar, the medical school, the jail, and the military police lines. The eastern end of the town is occupied by the cantonments. In addition to the buildings already mentioned, Dibrugarh contains a large masonry fort, which is now only used as an arsenal for the volunteers, a church, four small printing presses, at two of which weekly newspapers in English are published, a high school, and the workshops of the Dibru Sadiya Railway. The town has grown very rapidly of recent years. In 1872, the population was only 3,870 souls, nearly a third of whom were living in cantonments. In 1881, there were 7,153 inhabitants, in 1891, 9,876, and in 1901, 11,227.

The prosperity of the place is evinced by the fine shops erected by the richer Kaiyas, and the comfortable houses in which many of the native gentry dwell. In spite of this, Dibrugarh is one of the least picturesque of any of the towns in Assam. There are none of the low hills which add so much to the charm of Gauhati and Tezpur, none of the stately trees which convert Nowgong into a noble park. The town is well laid out, the streets are broad, there are hardly any slums, and the sanitary arrangements leave little to be desired, but apart from the view of the hills from the red road, the place is uninteresting, flat, and dull. The total area of the town including the cantonments is 2.1 square miles, and it contains altogether over 15 miles of

road, 13 of which are metalled. Drinking water is either obtained from the river or from wells, 20 of which have been sunk for the use of the general public. Dibrugarh is easy of access from the outside world. It is one of the termini of the Dibru-Sadiya Railway, and is thus connected by rail with Gauhati and with the sea at Chittagong. The trunk road from Dhubri to Sadiya runs through the town, and it is the terminus of the steamer service on the Brahmaputra.

The town was constituted a Municipality under Act V. (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878, and Act III (B. C.) of 1884 was introduced in 1887. The Municipal Committee consists of 14 members, 9 of whom are elected by the rate payers and are non-officials. The Deputy Commissioner has always hitherto been appointed Chairman, but the duties of Vice-Chairman are discharged by a private gentleman. The principal taxes imposed are a tax on holdings at the rate of 5 per cent. on the annual value, and a latrine rate. The incidence of income per head of population during the year 1903 (Rs. 3-9-9) was higher than that of any other urban area in the Province except Gauhati, Tezpur, and Shillong; but a considerable proportion of the income takes the form of a grant from Government, and the incidence of taxation per head, in 1903, was only Re. 1-5-2. In addition to the Government grant, the principal sources of income are taxes on houses and lands, animals and vehicles, the conservancy rate, and the revenue derived from the municipal market. Details with regard to the principal items of expenditure and revenue in 1890-91 and 1900-01 will be found in Table XVIII.

North Lakhimpur, the headquarters of the subdivision of that name, is little more than a village. Situated as it is on an upland plain covered with short grass, close to a range of hills nearly 10,000 feet in height, the appearance of the place is extremely picturesque. The public buildings include a small cutcherry, a school, a post and telegraph office, a dispensary, a circuit house, a dak bungalow and a small jail. A reminiscence of the former troubles on the frontier is to be found in the Government treasury, which is located in a masonry tower which was used as a fort in olden days. In the village street there are six Kaiyas shops, and some ten more kept by Muhammadans and up-country men. The Daflas and Miris bring down rubber, wax, madder, and elephants tusks, and the Assamese sell paddy, mustard, pulse, potatoes, and a small quantity of *eri* and *muga* silk cloths. The trade of the place is, however, unimportant, as the Kaiyas have many shops in the interior with which the villagers are able to deal direct.

North
Lakhimpur.

In 1872, the management of the district roads was entrusted to a committee presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. The funds at their disposal were partly obtained from tolls and ferries on local roads and other miscellaneous sources, but principally from grants made by the Bengal Government from the amalgamated district road fund. In 1874, when Assam was erected into a separate Administration, the Government of India assigned one seventeenth of the net land revenue for local purposes. The district improvement fund was then started, and the administration of its resources was

Local
Boards.

as before entrusted to the Deputy Commissioner assisted by a committee. The actual amount placed at their disposal was not large, and in 1875-76 the total income of the district funds of the Province was only Rs. 1,85,000, which was a small sum in comparison with the twelve and a half lakhs of rupees received by the Local Boards in 1903-04. In 1879, a Regulation was passed, providing for the levy of a local rate, and the appointment of a committee in each district to control the expenditure on roads, primary education, and the district post. Three years later, the district committees were abolished by executive order, and their place was taken by boards established in each subdivision, which are the local authorities in existence at the present day.

The Deputy Commissioner is Chairman of the board of the headquarters subdivision, but the board in North Lakhimpur is presided over by the subdivisional Officer. The Local Boards are entrusted with the maintenance of all roads within their jurisdiction, with the following exceptions. The trunk roads north and south of the Brahmaputra, the roads from North Lakhimpur to Kamalabari, and from Dibrugarh to Jaipur, the roads within municipal limits, and a few of purely political importance in the neighbourhood of Sadiya. They are also charged with the provision and maintenance of local staging bungalows and dispensaries, and with the supervision of village sanitation, vaccination, and the district post. They are also in charge of primary education, subject to the general control of the Education Department, and are empowered

to make grants-in-aid to schools of higher grade, subject to certain rules. For these purposes, they have placed at their disposal the rate which is levied under the Assam Local Rates Regulation of 1879, at the rate of one anna per rupee on the annual value of lands, as well as the surplus income of pounds and ferries, and some minor receipts. The receipts under the head of provincial rates are not sufficient to provide for the proper development of the district, and the local income is supplemented by large grants from Provincial funds. In the case of the North Lakhimpur Board this grant amounts to considerable more than half the total income, while in Dibrugarh it exceeds one third. The principal heads of income and expenditure are shown in Table XVII. The annual budgets of the boards are submitted to the Chief Commissioner for sanction. The estimates for all works, costing Rs. 500 or over, must be submitted to the Public Works Department for approval; and important works, requiring much professional skill, are made over for execution to that Department. Less important works are entrusted to the board overseers.

The following statement shows the constitution of the Local Boards in the district.

Name.	Area.	Population.	MEMBERS.				
			Total number.	Euro-pean.	Native.	Official.	Elected.
Dibrugarh ...	3,038	286,572	26	15	11	4	10
North Lakhimpur ...	1,174	84,824	14	8	6	2	6
Total Lakhimpur ...	4,207	371,396	40	23	17	6	16

Work done
by Local
Boards.

A glance at the Revenue survey map will show that the authorities entrusted with the construction and maintenance of the lines of communication in the district received no mean legacy from the days of native rule. The Bor Phukan Ali, the Mori Ali, the Rupgarh Ali, the Dhodar Ali, the Hapni Ali, the Solaguri Ali, are names which recall the Ahom Rajas with their legions of *paiks*, who were sometimes employed in the excavation of enormous tanks, sometimes in throwing up fine roads, raised well above the level of the surrounding country. During the last twenty years, the local authorities of Dibrugarh have not been much concerned to extend the existing mileage of their high-ways. They have, however, done good service in constructing bridges of masonry, or iron and timber over rivers which had previously to be crossed on rafts, or on temporary structures of bamboo, structures which were liable to be washed away in time of flood, or to suddenly collapse beneath some mounted traveller. Some of the most important of these bridges are those over the Tikra Disai, Dinjan, and Dholajan on the Rangagora road; over the Tingrai, Hingrijan, and Baliyan, on the Tingrai Hingrijan road; over the Kakojan and Mamochikajan on the Dhodar Ali; and over the Sesa on the Mankata road. They have also metalled short sections of these roads where the traffic is heaviest; but the enormous cost of metal-ling in Assam, and the heavy charges for repairs, has rendered it impossible hitherto to do very much in this direction. North of the Brahmaputra the country is more exposed to flood, and the roads have often to be

raised to a considerable height above the surrounding marsh. There is not as rich a legacy of public works from the days of native rule, and the local authorities have chiefly been engaged in raising and improving such lines of communication as the Badati, Dhakua-khana, and Gogamukh roads.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Native system of land revenue—Early settlements—The settlement of 1893-94—Expansion of the land revenue—Poll Tax—Established and fluctuating cultivation—Annual and periodic leases—Settlement staff—Land tenures—Land revenue collection—Town Land—Area of unsettled waste—Excise—Income Tax—Stamps—Public Works—Criminal and Civil Justice—Registration—Military—Civil Police—Military Police—Jail—Education—Printing Presses—Medical—Surveys.

Land
revenue.
Native
system.

The system of taxation in force under the Ahom kings was mainly one of personal service. The whole of the adult male population was divided into bodies of three men called *gots*, each individual being styled a *paik*. One *paik* out of the three was always engaged on labour for the State, and while so employed was supported by the remaining members of his *got*. In return for his labour each *paik* was allowed 8 *bighas** of *rupit* land, and the land, occupied by his house and garden, which is now called *basti*, free of revenue. Any land taken up in excess of this amount was assessed at As. 4 a *bigha*. In addition to this the villagers paid a poll-tax of one rupee for each adult *paik*.

Early
settlements.

The earliest land revenue report of Lakhimpur available is one submitted by Major White in January 1835, though it is really a misnomer to describe it as a

One acre=3'025 *bighas*.

land revenue report of Lakhimpur, as practically the whole of the district at that time was under native rule. In Purandar Singh's territory the *paiks* paid a capitation tax of Rs. 3 a head, in return for which they were allowed to cultivate 8 *bighas* of land. The system of organized compulsory labour seems to have fallen into disuse, though probably the Raja obtained all the labour he required free of charge. In Matak the people made presents to the Bor Senapati in kind, and a certain amount of labour was at his disposal. *Paiks* migrating from the territory of Purandar Singh paid in cash instead of kind, and such migration was encouraged by the assessment of a much lower rate than that prevailing in the Raja's territory. The revenue of the Sadiya-khoa Gohain, was obtained, like that of the Matak chief, from presents and occasional forced labour. In 1853, the revenue in Upper Matak was still collected in the form of a poll-tax of Rs. 2 on every able bodied man; but the population was extremely sparse and the gross demand only amounted in the previous year to Rs. 3,012. In North Lakhimpur and in Lower Matak, the rates assessed were 3 annas a *bigha* for *rupit* (land fit for the growth of transplanted rice) and 2 annas a *bigha* for other land. In Sadiya and Saikhoa they were one anna a *bigha* higher. The land revenue assessment of the district in 1853 was less than half a lakh, and the amount realized from poll-tax was only some Rs. 5,000 more.

In 1865, the Commissioner, Lieutenant-Colonel Hopkinson, proposed to discriminate between *basti* or garden and other land, and to raise the *bigha* rates to Re. 1

Colonel
Hopkinson's
settlement.

for *basti*, 10 annas for *rupit*, and 8 annas for other land. No detailed enquires were made, there was no attempt to estimate the comparative value of the three different classes of land, there was no discrimination between good and bad land in the same class, or even between the different districts in the valley. The revised rates were, however, so moderate that it was never seriously contended that, they would have an oppressive incidence even on the worst land on which they were imposed. Colonel Hopkinson was of opinion that the existing assessment was ridiculously low, and to support his contention, pointed out that in 1864-65 the receipts from opium were about 4 lakhs of rupees more than the total land revenue of his division, an excess which in those days represented a difference of about 40 per cent. The new assessment was successfully introduced in 1868-69, and in spite of the great enhancement* the revenue was collected without difficulty.

One very effective protest was, however, entered by the raiyats, who resigned so large a proportion of their land that the revised rates, though nearly double of those previously in force, only brought out an enhancement of about 26 per cent. in the gross revenue. But the land resigned was speedily retaken, and the land revenue demand of 1871-72 was nearly double that of the year preceding the re-assessment.

The
settlement
of 1893-94.

The next settlement was made in 1893. The three-fold division of land was retained, but instead of im-

* The land revenue of Assam Proper was raised from Rs. 12,89,000 to Rs. 20,78,000.

posing the same rate on all land of the same class throughout the district, the villages were divided into four grades, and the rates assessed varied with the grade of the village.* The villages were provisionally graded by the Director of Land Records and Agriculture, the class in which each village was placed being determined by the demand for land, and not by any intrinsic considerations of the value of the produce, the fertility of the soil, or the profits of cultivation. The demand for land was estimated by ascertaining the density of the population, the proportion of settled to unsettled land, and the proportion of fluctuating cultivation. These lists were sent to local officers for examination, and were modified by them in view of the fertility of the soil, the facilities for bringing the produce to market, and the rents paid by sub-tenants where ascertainable. This enquiry was carried out by the ordinary district staff within the space of a single cold weather, and the results obtained made no pretensions to scientific accuracy. Such accuracy was considered to be unnecessary, as it was not intended to impose anything like the maximum assessment on the land. The Government had no desire to assess up to its fair share of the value of the produce of the soil, and under these circumstances it was contended that it would be

* The following were the rates imposed—

		First class.		Second class.		Third class.		Fourth class.		
		Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	Rs.	A.	
<i>Basti</i>	...	1	6	1	4	1	2	1	0	per bigha.
<i>Rupit</i>	...	1	0	0	14	0	12	0	10	"
<i>Faringati</i>	...	0	12	0	10	0	9	0	8	"

waste of time and money to have recourse to any minute and elaborate classification of the soils, to crop experiments on a large scale, or to a close examination of all the elements that affect the net profits of the cultivator. The theory on which the settlement was based, was, that the worst lands were capable of bearing the assessment imposed, and that Government alone was a loser by its inequalities.

**Expansion of
the land
revenue.**

The following statement shows what an extraordinary development there has been both in the settled area and the land revenue demand during the past fifty years. The one has increased five fold, the other, thanks to the gradual raising of the rates, by twice as much. This enormous development is principally due to British enterprise, which has imported coolies in thousands to develop the natural resources of the district. The raiyat has had every inducement offered to him to extend his operations, and the cultivating classes have been reinforced not only by the increasing number of their own sons and daughters, but by the diligent immigrant from Bengal.

A D		Rs.		Acres.
1851-52	...	55,118	...	76,789
1865-66	—	1,18,651	..	129,428
1868-69	...	1 38 002	...	not available
1892-93	...	2,75,853	...	298,901
1893-94	...	3 70 124	..	310,915
1902-03	...	5,79,051	...	414,228

Poll Tax.

A relic of the former revenue administration is still to be found in the poll tax of Rs. 3 per adult male, which is assessed on Miris who have settled in the plains. They

live for the most part in the *chapori* tracts, grow summer rice and mustard, and seldom plough the same field for more than two or three years in succession. They are gradually settling down to the cultivation of transplanted rice, in holdings which are kept on permanently from year to year, and, when in any village the area under permanent cultivation is sufficiently extensive to render it profitable to assess it in the ordinary way, the poll tax is abolished and land revenue substituted in its place.

The system of cultivation in the district falls into two main heads, established and fluctuating. In the established area the staple crop is *sali* or transplanted paddy, land is not readily resigned, and frequently possesses a considerable market value. In the fluctuating tracts the staple crops are mustard, pulse, and summer rice (*ahu*), and continual change is one of the essential elements of cultivation, the same field being seldom cropped for more than three years in succession. This fluctuating area is confined to high lands and to a belt on either side of the Brahmaputra, and along the banks of the larger rivers that flow from the hills through North Lakhimpur. Only about 9 per cent. of the total settled area of Lakhimpur is classed as fluctuating, a proportion which is much lower than that found in the districts of Lower and Central Assam. There is a marked difference in the distribution of this fluctuating area between the two subdivisions. In Dibrugarh the fluctuating area is less than 1½ per cent. of the total settled area. In North Lakhimpur it is nearly 39 per cent.

Established
and fluctuating
cultivation.

Annual and periodic leases.

The bulk of the land on which the staple crops of the district are grown is held direct from Government by the actual cultivators of the soil on annual or periodic lease. The periodic lease confers a right of re-settlement and a heritable and transferable title. Annual leases merely authorise the occupation of the land for a single year, though in practice the rights of transfer, inheritance, and re-settlement are recognized. The only drawback of the annual lease lies in the fact that, if the land happens to be required by Government, it can be resumed without payment of compensation to the occupant. Land held under either form of lease, or any individual field within the holding, can be resigned, on formal notice of the fact being given to the Deputy Commissioner or Subdivisional officer.

The mandal

The basis of the land revenue system is the mandal, the village accountant and surveyor who draws a modest stipend ranging from Rs. 8 to Rs. 12 per mensem. In March he inspects the fields which have been formally resigned to see whether they have been actually relinquished, tests the boundaries of fields taken up in recent years to see whether they are in accordance with the map, and surveys land which has been broken up for what is called the regular settlement, or for which a formal application has been filed. His two principal registers are the *dag-chitha*, in which particulars are entered for each field within the village, and the *jamabandhi* or rent roll, which classifies the fields by holdings, and shows the area covered by each lease. During the hot wea-

ther he is occupied with the revision of his maps and registers, and the preparation of his leases. When the winter comes, he again proceeds to the field, distributes the leases he has prepared, and surveys the land which has been broken up since his former tour, and which is included in what is known as the *dariabadi* or supplementary settlement. He is also required to prepare statistics of the area under different crops, he assists in the collection of the revenue, and is often ordered to report on local disputes connected with the land.

In most Provinces in India, a settlement is concluded for a term of years. During its currency no land which is held on lease can be resigned, and there is not as a rule any appreciable quantity of waste land to be taken up. The state of affairs in Lakhimpur is very different. In 1902-03 the total settled area was 414,228 acres, the area excluded was 14,000 acres, and the area of land newly taken up 21,885 acres. The area of land resigned is, for Assam, comparatively small. This is due to the fact that the level of the district as a whole is fairly high, and to the absence of any pressure on the soil which enables the villagers to exercise a certain amount of discrimination in their choice of land.

The area taken up and resigned in 1903-01, and subsequent years in each of the subdivisions will be found in Table XII.

Above the mandal comes the supervisor kanungo, a peripatetic officer, on pay ranging from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40, Superior
settlement,
staff.

who checks the mandal's work, both in the field and in the office. The superior revenue officers are called sub-deputy collectors, and draw salaries ranging from Rs. 100 to Rs. 200 per mensem. Appointments to this grade are usually made by selection from candidates who must be of good physique and moral character, of respectable family, under 25 years of age, and must either have taken a university degree, or have read up to that standard. The total sanctioned staff for the Lakhimpur district is two sub-deputy collectors, six supervisor kanungoes, and 113 mandals. In cadastral areas the average size of a mandal's charge is about six square miles of settled land.

**Land
tenures.**

The different tenures in the district fall under two main classes—(1) those under which land is held for the cultivation of ordinary crops and (2) those under which grants have been made for the growth of tea or other crops, which are not included amongst the ordinary staples of the Province, and which require a considerable amount of capital for their production. The bulk of the land included in the first class is settled under the ordinary rules at full rates, and the area so settled from year to year will be found in Table XV. The area of land held free of revenue (*lakhiraj*) or at half rates (*nisfi-khiraj*), is very small. These estates represent grants made by the Ahom Rajas and confirmed by the British Government. The manner in which some of them became assessed to revenue is described in the Gazetteer of the Sibsagar district. A small area of 141 acres is also held revenue free by Katakis, a class

of men who are supposed to act as the intermediaries between Government and the hill tribes.

Two sets of rules were in force for the grant of land for tea prior to 1862. The underlying principal in each case, was that the land should be held on long leases at low but progressive rates of revenue, and that precautions should be taken against land speculation by the imposition of clearance conditions. Between 1862 and 1876, the fee simple tenure of waste land grants was put up to auction at an upset price of Rs. 2-8 an acre, which in 1874 was raised to Rs. 8. The holders of grants under the earlier rules of 1838 and 1854 were also allowed to purchase a fee simple tenure by payment of twenty times the revenue then due, provided that the clearance conditions had been carried out. Advantage was very generally taken of this concession, and there is no longer in the district any land held under the rules of 1838 and 1854, while there are 117,000 acres held on fee simple tenure. The existing rules came into force in 1876. The land is sold at an upset price of Re. 1 per acre, for, though it is nominally put up to auction, there is no case on record in which more than one applicant appeared to bid. For two years the grant remains revenue free, and the rates gradually rise to 8 annas an acre in the eleventh, and one rupee in the twenty-first year. The lease runs for 30 years, and when it expires the land is liable to re-assessment. The total area settled under these rules in 1902-03 was 71,000 acres. Details by subdivisions and for later years will be found in Table XV.

Grant of
land for the
cultivation
of special
crops.

**Land
revenue
collection.**

In the early days of our administration land revenue was collected through the agency of the mauzadar. He received 10 per cent. of the collections for his trouble, and was assisted by a Kakati or village accountant, who received 5 per cent. The peons employed were remunerated by grants of land, and in Lower Matak the mauzadar received an extra 2 per cent. in land. In 1853 there were 87 mauzas, but the majority of these fiscal units were very different from the mauza of to-day. In no less than 26 the total revenue demand was less than Rs. 100, and in no single case did it amount to as much as Rs. 3,000.

**Larger
mauzas and
tahsils.**

The general tendency since that date has been to increase the size of the unit of collection. In 1867, the mauzadars, as the collecting officers were called, received 15 per cent of the revenue as commission, and were allowed half the revenue of land reclaimed during the currency of the settlement. Three years later their commission was reduced to 10 per cent. and in 1872, the further restriction was imposed that this 10 per cent could only be drawn on the first Rs. 6,000 of revenue, 5 per cent being allowed on revenue in excess of that sum. In 1883, steps were taken in Lower Assam to replace the mauzadar by a salaried officials. Mauzas were accordingly amalgamated and placed in charge of an official called a tahsildar, who was remunerated by a fixed salary, and was exempted from the responsibility imposed upon the mauzadar of paying in the revenue on the due dates, irrespective of the amounts actually collected by him. Only one tahsil was, however, opened

in Lakhimpur, *i.e.*, at Dibrugurh in 1896, and, as the results obtained were not satisfactory it was broken up into its constituent mauzas in 1904.

The revenue demand on account of the regular settlement is due in two instalments, three-fifths on January 15th and two-fifths on the 15th February, except in those villages which meet the Government demand from the sale, of mustard and pulse, when it is due in one instalment on March 15th. The demand on account of the supplementary settlement is also due in one instalment on that date. If a raiyat defaults, a notice of demand is issued calling upon him to pay up the amount due.* This usually has the desired result, but if further steps are called for the defaulters' property is attached. It is very seldom necessary to do more than this, but, as a last resort, the goods and even the lands of the defaulter can be sold. The number of cases in which an estate is put up to auction is comparatively small, and it is not unfrequently the case that, even when advertised for sale, it attracts no bid. Land is so plentiful in the Assam Valley, that in many places it has no selling value, and in the more densely settled areas, where it would fetch a considerable price, it seldom comes to the hammer. The following statement which contains the figures for 1902-03, shows the extent to which coercive processes are employed, and how seldom it is necessary to actually sell the property

**Compulsory
realization
of revenue.**

* Steps have recently been taken to empower the Deputy Commissioner to dispense with the notice of demand if he considers it desirable to do so.

of the defaulter. Imprisonment in default of payment of land revenue is not permitted by law in Assam.

	Rs.
Current land revenue demand	5,79,061
Arrears for which notice for demand issued	84,720
Amount of arrears paid on receipt of notice	47 853
Arrears for which property attached	89 740
Arrears for which sale notice issued	8 665
Arrears for which property sold	2,284

Town Land.

Special rules, it is hardly necessary to say, are in force for the settlement of town land. Dibrugarh is the only town, and it was settled for a period of 15 years in 1893. The rates assessed vary from Rs 150 an acre for first class trade sites, and Rs. 18 an acre for the best residential land, to Rs. 6 per acre for land cropped with rice. Under the rules now in force waste land taken up for the first time within town limits is to be settled ordinarily for a term of thirty years, at a fair rent not exceeding the annual letting value of the site. The lease of the land applied for may, if the Deputy Commissioner thinks fit, be put up to auction and knocked down to the highest bidder. In North Lakhimpur, which is really no more than a prosperous village, town land is assessed at Rs. 6 per acre, or double the rate ordinarily imposed on first class *rupit* land.

Area of unsettled waste.

The following abstract shows the total area of the district within the Inner Line, the settled area, and the area of reserved forests in 1902-03, and the area of waste land at the disposal of Government in that year.

	acres.
Total area of the district	2,898,540
Settled area	414,228
Area of reserved forests	217 522
Area of waste land	2,266,810

No less than 77 per cent. of the total area of the district falls in the latter category, but it must not be supposed that the whole of this area is fit for cultivation or human habitation. The figure includes the area of roads and of tracts that are permanently under water, of land which is submerged during the rainy season, and is hardly fit for permanent habitation, and of land which is too high or barren to be fit for the growth of food crops. It is useless to attempt to form any estimate of the proportion of the unsettled area in which cultivation could be carried on with profit, and it is hardly necessary to do so, as it is obvious that the district could support a much larger population than it now possesses. No less than 90 per cent. of the country north of the Brahmaputra is unsettled, Nokari being the only mauza in which any appreciable portion of the country has been taken up. In the sadr subdivision there are large areas of waste land towards the south and east, but the mauzas in the neighbourhood of Dibrugarh and the country through which the railway passes to Makum is densely peopled, and in this portion of the district comparatively little waste is still remaining. The settled and unsettled area in each mauza in 1902-03 will be found in Table XV A.

The excise revenue of Lakhimpur is very large, and from Table XIV it will be seen that, at the present day it amounts to about Rs. 7,75,000, or some two lakhs more than the total land revenue of the district. About two-thirds of the whole is obtained from opium, the consumption of this drug being larger in Lakhimpur than in any other district of the Province.

Excise.
opium.

Prior to 1860, no restriction was placed upon the cultivation of the poppy. The evil effects of unrestrained indulgence in opium were undeniable, and in that year poppy cultivation was prohibited, and the drug was issued from the treasury, the price charged being Rs. 14 a seer. This was raised to Rs. 20 in 1862, Rs. 22 in 1863, Rs. 23 in 1873, Rs. 24 in 1875, Rs. 26 in 1879, Rs. 32 in 1883, and Rs. 37 in 1890, the price at which it now stands.

While Assam was under the Bengal Government, licenses for the retail vend of opium were issued free of charge. In 1874, a fee of Rs. 12 per annum was levied on each shop, and in the following year it was raised to Rs. 18. Between 1877 and 1883 the right to sell opium in a particular mahal, or tract of country, was put up to auction, but this system was found to be unsatisfactory, and in the latter year the individual shops were sold as is done at the present day. The general result of the Government policy has been to largely reduce the facilities for obtaining the drug. In 1873-74 there were in the district 517 licensed shops. In 1902-03, though the population had in the interval increased threefold, there were only 140 shops, each of which paid on the average a license fee of over Rs. 700.

The statement in the margin shows the variations in consumption since 1873-74. In

1873-74	...	Mds.
		383
1879-80	...	329
1889-90	...	359
1899 00	...	374

spite of the fact that between the first and last years of the series the duty was raised by more than 60 per cent., there has been very little decrease in consumption. There has, of course,

been a considerable increase in the indigenous population, especially of Miris,* a tribe who are much addicted to the drug, and it has been sometimes thought that there would have been an increase in consumption had it not been for opium smuggling. Opium can be sold retail in Lakhimpur for from Rs. 1,600 to Rs. 2,000 a maund. In parts of India it can be bought for very much less than this, so that the profits of the business would be very large and the risk comparatively small. In the summer of 1898 much attention was paid to this matter by the Deputy Commissioner, and a Marwari convicted of illegal practices was imprisoned and not merely fined. In 1898-99 the issues of treasury opium increased by $45\frac{1}{2}$ maunds, and were nearly 32 maunds larger than the issues of any of the four preceding years, and it is possible, that there was some causal connection between the imprisonment and the increase in consumption. In 1901, a small preventive force consisting of one Inspector, two Sub-Inspectors, and five chaprasis was sanctioned for employment in the Province, but they did not succeed in discovering any evidence of opium smuggling on an extensive scale, and they have recently been amalgamated with the general excise establishment.

The drug is generally swallowed in the form of pills or mixed with water and drunk. Madak is made by mixing boiled opium with pieces of dried pan leaf, and stirring it over the fire. The compound is then rolled up into pills and smoked. Chandu is made out of

* Miris 1881, 11,627,—1901,24,911.

opium boiled with water till the water has all evaporated, and is smoked like madak in the form of pills. Opium is not generally smoked in Assam, and this form of taking the drug is usually considered to be more injurious than when it is simply swallowed. Further details with regard to the number of shops in each subdivision, the quantity of opium issued, and the receipts both from license fees and duty in each year will be found in Table XVI.

Country
spirit.

The following statement shows that during the last twenty years of the century there was an enormous increase in the revenue derived from country spirits.

		Number of shops.	Revenue. Rs.
1879-80	...	11	4,814
1889-90	...	22	40,056
1899-1900	...	25	157,720

This would at first suggest that consumption had very much increased, that the liquor habit had spread amongst the people, and that persons who had once been moderate drinkers had taken to drinking in excess; but this is not the case. The prevalence of drinking is best measured by the increase in the number of shops. If this test be applied, it appears that while the foreign population, a large proportion of whom are liquor drinkers, has increased four fold,* the number of shops has little more than doubled.

The revenue is raised by putting up the right to manufacture and sell liquor at a particular shop to auction.

* Foreigners 1881 40 787 1901 152,856.

If there is no competition, the vendor obtains this license cheap, and his profits are enormous. Where there are several persons anxious to embark upon the business, the price of the license is run up, and a portion of the profits of the liquor trade is diverted from the pockets of the vendor into the exchequer of the State. The publican has little opportunity of pushing the sale of his liquor, and it is doubtful whether, if the license fees were abolished or reduced, the consumption of spirit would be in any way diminished.

It cannot be denied that, in the neighbourhood of some liquor shops, drunkenness and disorderly conduct are not uncommon, and the attention of the Administration, has been more than once directed to the most effective measures for the mitigation of this evil. One of the most serious obstacles to improvement, lies in the fact that, if the supply of licensed liquor is cut off, rice beer and spirit can be readily manufactured by the people. That this is no imaginary difficulty, is shown by the fact that complaints have more than once been received of excessive drunkenness on tea gardens, which were situated far beyond the reach of any licensed liquor shop. The outstill system has admittedly many drawbacks, and will be replaced, as soon as circumstances admit of it, by a system of central distilleries. The following measures have recently been introduced, with the object of reducing as far as possible the evils attendant on the liquor trade. A special excise establishment has been entertained, the vendor is required to arrange for an abundant supply of good drinking water

near his shop, and his license can be withdrawn if he is twice convicted of allowing drunkenness and disorderly conduct near the still.

The still. Country spirit is manufactured by native methods, and generally in what is known as the open still. The apparatus employed consists of a large brass or copper retort which is placed over the fire, to the top of which is fitted the still head, a compound vessel, part of which is made of earthenware and part of brass. The wash is placed in the retort, and, as it boils, rises in the form of vapour into the still head, over the outer surface of which a stream of cold water is continually kept flowing. As the vapour cools, it is precipitated in the form of liquid, and is carried off by a bamboo tube into a vessel placed at the side. The mouth of this tube is open, and the spirit trickles from it into the vessel beneath, so that the outer air has access by this channel into the still head and retort in which the process of distillation is going on. In the closed still, the vapour passes down two tubes into two receivers where it is cooled and condenses into liquid. These tubes are so fixed to the receivers that the air cannot have access to the spirit, and, though distillation does not proceed so rapidly, the liquor produced is stronger than that obtained from the open still.

Material employed. The material employed is generally the flower of the mohwa tree (*bassia latifolia*), which contains a very large proportion of sugar, but its place is sometimes taken by molasses and rice. The following are the proportions in which these ingredients are generally

mixed—mohwa 30 seers and water 60 seers, or mohwa 25 seers, molasses 5 seers, and water 60 seers, or boiled rice 20 seers, molasses 10 seers, and water 80 seers. *Bakhar*, a substance composed of leaves, roots and spices, whose actual ingredients are not divulged by the villagers who manufacture it, is frequently added to the wash, which is put to ferment in barrels. Fermentation takes three or four days in summer and a week in the cold weather, and the wash is then considered to be ready for the still.

The process of distillation takes about three hours. A retort of 40 gallons yields two gallons of spirit in an hour and three quarters, three gallons in two hours and a quarter, and four gallons in three hours. The best and strongest spirit comes off first, and in the case of a brew of 30 seers of mohwa the first $3\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *phul*, if they are at once drawn off from the receiver. If they are allowed to remain while two more gallons are distilled, the whole $5\frac{1}{2}$ gallons will be classed as *bangla*. The exact proportions vary, however, at the different shops, some distillers taking $4\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *phul* or $5\frac{1}{4}$ gallons of *bangla* from 30 seers of mohwa. Occasionally only two gallons of spirit are distilled from 30 seers of mohwa, and the liquor is then called *thul*, is very strong, and is sold for one or two rupees a quart. *Thul* is also sometimes made by redistilling *bangla*. Only one kind of liquor is generally taken from each distillation, as, if the *thul* or *phul* were removed, the spirit subsequently distilled would be not only weak but impure. Strong liquor watered to reduce it to a lower

strength is not considered palatable, and it seems to be the usual practice to distil the liquor at the actual strength at which it will be sold. One disadvantage of the cheaper kind of liquor is that it will not keep, and in four or five weeks it is said to lose all its spirituous qualities. The largest and most important liquor shops are those situated at Dumduma, Margherita, Bhati Bazar in Dibrugarh, Tinsukia, Balijan siding, and Graham Bazar in Dibrugarh. Further details with regard to the annual receipts from country spirits will be found in table XVI.

Laopani.

Laopani, or rice beer, is the national drink of the unconverted tribes, and a special name, *modahi*, is applied to those who have to some extent attorned to Hinduism, but have not yet abandoned their ancestral liquor. It is also taken by some of the humble Hindu castes, and is largely used by garden coolies if facilities are not afforded to them for obtaining country spirit. The following is the usual system of manufacture followed. The rice is boiled and spread on a mat, and *bakhar* is powdered and sprinkled over it. After about twelve hours it is transferred to an earthen jar, the mouth of which is closed, and left to ferment for three or four days. Water is then added and allowed to stand for a few hours, and the beer is at last considered to be ready. The usual proportions are 5 seers of rice and 3 chattaks of *bakhar* to half a *kulsi* of water, and the liquor produced is said to be much stronger than most European beers. Liquor is often illicitly distilled from *laopani* or boiled rice, by the following simple method. An

earthen pot with a hole in the bottom is placed on the top of the vessel containing the *laopani* or rice, and the whole is set on the fire. The mouth of the upper pot is closed by a cone shaped vessel filled with cold water, and a saucer is placed at the bottom of the pot over the hole. The vapour rises into the upper of the two jars, condenses against the cold cone, with which the mouth is closed, and falls in the form of spirit on to the saucer beneath. Care must of course be taken to see that the various cracks are closed against the passage of the spirituous vapour, but this can easily be done with strips of cloth. No attempt is made to restrict the manufacture of rice beer in moderate quantities for home use, as any attempt to do so would certainly lead to corruption and oppression. In a matter of this kind the influence of the Hindu gosains, and the pressure of local village opinion has more effect than any direct action of the Government.

Ganja is usually mixed with water, kneaded till it becomes soft, cut into small strips, and smoked. Wild ganja grows very freely in Assam, but it is doubtful whether it is much used except as a medicine for cattle. It does not produce such strong effects as the ganja of Rajshahi, but the leaves are sometimes dried and mixed with milk, water, and sugar to form a beverage. The receipts from ganja amounted to Rs. 54,000 in 1904: further details as to the number of shops and the receipts in each subdivision will be found in Table XVI. Ganja is not much in favour with the Assamese, and the revenue derived under this head from the North

Ganja.

Lakhimpur subdivision, where the proportion of foreigners is comparatively small, is inconsiderable.

Income-Tax] The total receipts under the head of income-tax in 1904 amounted to Rs. 49,734, about three-fifths of which were derived from the salaries paid to the Managers of tea gardens and their staff. The receipts under the head of "Other sources of income" amounted to Rs. 12,740 paid by 316 persons, five-sixths of whom were engaged in commerce and trade. The receipts under this head would, moreover, have been higher, were it not for the fact that some of the wealthiest firms of kайyas pay income-tax in Calcutta on the profits made in Lakhimpur. The lists of assesseees are annually examined by the local revenue officials, and checked by the subordinate magistracy, before final orders are passed by the Deputy Commissioner. The district is a progressive one and the receipts under the Act rose from Rs. 22,800 in 1888 to Rs. 59,600 in 1903. The tax on salaries paid by Companies and private employers rose from Rs. 15,200 to Rs. 34,100, and on other sources of income from Rs. 4,400 to Rs. 19,800. The decrease that occurred in the following year was due to Act XI of 1903, which raised the minimum taxable income from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1,000 per annum.

Stamps. The receipts from stamps in 1904 amounted to Rs. 67,000, rather more than half of which was realized from judicial stamps. Sibsagar is the only district in the Assam Valley in which the receipts under this head are larger than in Lakhimpur.

Public Works. Public Works are in charge of an Executive or Assis-

tant Engineer, who is usually assisted by four upper and two lower subordinates. The Public Works Department are entrusted with the construction and maintenance of all the larger public buildings. The most important are the jail, the public offices, the buildings occupied by the military and the military police, schools, and post and telegraph offices at district and subdivisional headquarters, official residences for Government officers, circuit houses, dāk bungalows, and rest houses on provincial roads. Rest houses on other roads are maintained by the Local Boards. The roads maintained by the department have already been enumerated in the section dealing with Local Boards, and it has been explained that Local Board works that require professional skill or engineering knowledge are usually made over to the Executive Engineer for execution. The principal difficulties with which the department has to contend are the absence of an artisan class, and the scarcity and dearness of unskilled labour. It is to these two causes that the heavy cost of public works in Lakhimpur is largely due.

For general administrative purposes the district is **Government** divided into two subdivisions. Dibrugarh is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, and North Lakhimpur is entrusted to an Assistant Magistrate who is almost invariably a European.

The Deputy Commissioner is allowed two subordinate Magistrates and a sub-deputy collector as his immediate assistants, and a sub-deputy collector is usually posted at North Lakhimpur.

Criminal and
Civil Justice.

Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the orders passed by Magistrates of the second or third class, and from the orders of first class Magistrates to the Judge of the Assam Valley. Appeals from the Judge lie to the High Court of Fort William at Calcutta. In 1902, there were eight Stipendiary and seven Honorary Magistrates in the district, and the former decided 1,645 and the latter 130 original criminal cases. In the course of these proceedings 3,975 witnesses were examined. Altogether there were 1,294 cases under the Penal Code returned as true, the immense majority of which were either offences against property or the human body. Of recent years the number of cases of murder and culpable homicide in Lakhimpur has been unusually large. In the ten years ending with 1899, the average was 2 per annum, and in 1897 there were 19, and in 1900, 18 cases of this the most serious of all crimes. The total number of lives sacrificed is, perhaps, not very large, but in proportion to the population of the district it is most excessive. In 1897, there was one true case of murder or culpable homicide for every 19,000 people.* In the Province of Bengal in 1901 the proportion was one for every 134,000 people. Judged by the far from satisfactory test of the value of the property reported to be stolen, Lakhimpur is well up to the provincial standard for theft and burglary, and if anything a little in advance of it. The average value of the property annually stolen during the ten years ending with 1899 was about Rs. 20,000.

* The proportion is even worse than this figure would suggest, as the population of 1897 must have been considerably lower than that of 1901 on which these figures were worked out.

The civil work is not heavy and the Deputy Commissioner acts as Sub-Judge, while two of the Assistant Magistrates, of whom the Subdivisional Officer of North Lakhimpur is one, carry on the work of munsifs in addition to their other duties. In 1902, the Sub-Judge heard 21 original cases and 23 appeals, while 1,436 original suits were disposed of by the munsifs. Almost all of these cases were simple money suits, and nearly three-fourths of them were disposed of without contest.

Special rules are in force for the administration of justice in the Sadiya frontier tract, in the north-east corner of the Dibrugarh subdivision. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred, and the Criminal Procedure Code is not in force. Justice is ordinarily administered by the Deputy Commissioner, the Assistant Political Officer in immediate charge of the tract, and by the village elders. The Deputy Commissioner may pass sentence of death, transportation, and imprisonment not exceeding 14 years, provided that no sentence of death, transportation, or imprisonment for seven years or upwards shall be carried into effect without the sanction of the Chief Commissioner. Petty criminal cases and civil cases in which natives of the frontier are concerned, are as far as possible disposed of by the headman of the village. The general policy of Government is to abstain from interference with the local customs, to discourage litigation, and to administer cheap and speedy justice, in which equity is not obscured by the intricacies of law.

Registration The Deputy Commissioner is also District Registrar, while one of the Assistant Magistrates acts as Sub-Registrar in both the subdivisions. The number of documents registered is, however, small, and in 1903 only amounted to 583.

Military. The garrison of Lakhimpur consists of the wing of a native infantry regiment whose head-quarters are at Dibrugarh, with a detachment stationed at Sadiya. In addition to the regulars there is a strong battalion of military police, described in the following section, whose duties are of a purely military character, and the volunteers. A corps of mounted infantry was first enrolled in Lakhimpur in 1882, with a strength of 54 members. Nine years later the volunteers in the four upper districts of the valley were formed into one corps, known as the Assam Valley Mounted Rifles, and in 1896 the Mounted Rifles were converted into Light Horse. The strength of the corps in 1903 was 312, 139 of whom were residing in Lakhimpur. The great bulk of the members of this corps are planters, and they form a really fine body of men, well mounted, well equipped, and of excellent physique, who in an emergency would be of great assistance in maintaining order.

Police.
Civil police. The civil police are in charge of a District or Assistant Superintendent of Police. The sanctioned strength consists of 2 Inspectors, 18 Sub-Inspectors and 163 constables. Forty smooth-bore Martinis are allotted to Lakhimpur and a reserve of men is kept up at the district and subdivisional head-quarters, who are armed with these weapons and are employed on guard and escort duty

Up-country men, Nepalese, and members of the aboriginal tribes are usually deputed to this work, though attempts are made to put all the constables through an annual course of musketry. Table XIX shows the strength and cost of the police in 1881, 1891, and 1901.

The district is fairly free from serious crime and rural police are not employed. Such assistance as is necessary is given by the village elders or *gaoburas*. In addition to their regular duties in connection with the prevention and detection of crime, the police are required to check the returns of vital statistics, manage pounds, enquire into cases in which death has not been due to natural causes, to furnish guards and escorts, and to serve all processes in warrant cases. For police purposes the district is divided into ten investigating centres. The names of these stations with the force sanctioned for each will be found in Table XX.

Dibrugarh is the head-quarters of the Lakhimpur military police battalion which has a sanctioned strength of 7 subadars, 8 jemadars, and 832 non-commissioned officers and men, under a Commandant, who is always a military man, and generally a Captain in the Indian Army. The battalion holds a chain of outposts along the frontier, to protect the plains from the aggression of the hill men. The strength of these posts in officers and men is shewn in brackets after their names. On the north-west there is North Lakhimpur (34), then comes Sisi (14), and Dijmur, a little to the north-east of Sisi (18). The next guard is

**Military
police.**

at Mekla nearly opposite Dibrugarh (18), east of that comes Lali (20), and then Sessleri (18) near the mouth of the Dihang. Sadiya is a strong post garrisoned by two native officers and 64 non-commissioned officers and men, and north of Sadiya come Dikrang (14), Difu (18), Kerempani (25), and Bomjur, which is our furthest outpost on the north-east, (30). On the extreme east in the direction of the Brahmakund is Sanpura (18), while in the south of the district near the Naga Hills there are outposts at Lungchang (21), and Jaipur (11). Garrisons are permanently stationed at North Lakhimpur, Sadiya, and Jaipur. Elsewhere the outposts are only held for six months, as, when the rivers rise in the rainy season, the hill men are unable to descend to the plains. The stockades are surrounded by a ditch, the earth from which is thrown up to form a bank. On the top of this is a bamboo palisade, and both bank and ditch are studded with *panyis*, or pieces of sharp bamboo, which form a serious obstacle to an unshod enemy, so that against a force unprovided with fire arms these outposts would be able to make a good defence. The battalion has a good war record, and has taken part in the Aka expedition of 1883-84, the Lushai expedition of 1890-91, the Manipur expedition of 1891, the Abor expedition of 1893-94, and the Mishmi expedition of 1899-1900. The service is not unpopular and recruits are fairly easily obtained, about 78 per cent. being Gurkhas, and the remainder members of the aboriginal tribes such as Garos, Rabhas, Meches and Kacharis. The number of resignations is, however, high, as men,

when they first join, find it difficult to live upon their pay, and Assam has many attractions for the Nepalese. At Dibrugarh and North Lakhimpur the battalion supplies guards for the treasury and jail. The men are armed with Martini Henry rifles mark IV, bayonets, and kukris. Table XXI shows the name of each outpost, the distance from head-quarters, and the strength by which it is held.

The jail at Dibrugarh differs from most of those in the Province, in that the outer wall and almost all the buildings inside are composed of solid masonry. The principal sleeping wards are three in number, and there are other small detached buildings for the reception of the sick, and under trial, civil, and female prisoners. Outside the main wall there is on one side a large vegetable garden, and on the other an enclosure in which are situated the jail workshops. The following statement shows the accommodation provided for all classes of prisoners.

JAIL

Male convicts	...	...	...	108
Under-trial	...	...	...	11
Hospital	...	...	...	8
Civil prisoners	...	...	...	4
Observation cells	...	...	...	6
Females	...	...	...	21
Total				158

The convicts are usually employed on oil pressing, bamboo and cane work, tailoring, weaving, carpentry and gardening, but the receipts from manufactures are not large. Males sentenced to more than one year's imprisonment, and females with a longer sentence than a

month, are transferred to Tezpur. In North Lakhimpur there is a small subsidiary jail of the usual type. The buildings are made of thatch, timber, and bamboos, and are surrounded by a bamboo palisade. They contain accommodation for 23 convicts, who are generally employed on oil pressing or gardening. Prisoners sentenced to a longer term than three months are transferred to Dibrugarh. Table XXII shows the population of each of these jails in 1881, 1891, and 1901, the death-rate, the profits from manufactures, and the expenditure per head.

Education. The first school opened in the district was the one at Dibrugarh, which was started in 1840, and was the nucleus from which the existing flourishing high school has been developed. Prior to the opening of this institution, education was almost unknown in Lakhimpur, and it is said that it was difficult to find a man, even amongst the upper classes, who knew how to sign his name.* In 1842, a school was opened in North Lakhimpur, but even in 1853 there were only six schools in the district, with 270 pupils on their books, the remaining four being situated at Dhakuakhana, Bardalani, Saikhoa, and Tengakhat. Progress continued to be very slow, or rather there was retrogression in the place of progress, as eleven years later the number of Government schools was still unchanged, and the number of scholars had fallen to 169. There was, however, an unaided Mission School in Dibrugarh, which

* Report on the Province of Assam, by A. J. Moffatt Mills, Calcutta, 1854 Lakhimpur. Appendix D.

was well reported on, and had some 70 or 80 pupils. Between 1864 and 1874 there was an enormous development of the whole system of education. In the short space of ten years the number of schools increased nearly ten fold, and the number of scholars almost as much. The following statement shows the progress made in the three decades ending 1900-01.

Year	Number of secondary schools.	Pupils.	Number of primary schools.	Pupils.	Total Number of pupils	Percentage under instruction to those of school-going age.	
						Males.	Females
1874-75	3	271	58	1,582	1,853	...	...
1880-81	6	551	53	1,703	2,254	15.52	0.22
1890-91	7	642	97	2,351	2,993	14.04	0.69
1900-01	13	1,243	202	4,184	5,427	17.55	0.97

Secondary education has made some strides, and the number of pupils in primary schools has, no doubt, increased, but not as rapidly as might have been expected. The proportion of boys under instruction to those of school-going age was positively lower in 1891 than it had been ten years before. Though the same cannot be said of the first year of the century, the increase in the percentage was very small, and barely one out of every six potential scholars was at school. This stagnation in matters educational is no doubt partly due to the presence of a large coolie population, whose children assist their parents from an early age.

In 1901, 62 per mille of the male population were returned as literate, a proportion which was higher than that in any district in the Assam Valley except

Kamrup. A large proportion of the educated classes are, however, foreigners, and more than half the literates were literate in Bengali or other foreign languages. It is difficult to measure the growth of literacy in the district, as, prior to 1901, all persons under instruction were shown as "learning" whether they could read and write or not, while the fact that so many of the literates are foreigners serves to obscure the progress or decline of education in Lakhimpur itself. It is, however, clear that the aboriginal tribes, such as the Miris and Kacharis, and the lower Hindu castes who form the bulk of the indigenous population, are still but little impressed with the advantages of learning.

There is only one high school in the district, which is situated at Dibrugarh. The boys are taught from the earliest stage of their education up to the Entrance course as prescribed by the University of Calcutta, but many leave school without completing the course. Till recently English was taught in all the classes. The boys in the lowest class no longer learn that language, but the standard of instruction is higher than that prevailing in lower secondary (middle) schools. English is the medium of instruction in the first four classes of high schools, in the lower classes and in other schools the vernacular is employed. The course of instruction at middle English and middle vernacular schools is the same, with the exception that English is taught in the former and not in the latter. The following are the subjects taught in the middle vernacular course :—(1) Bengali or Assamese, comprising literature, grammar,

and composition, (2) History of India, (3) Geography, (4) Arithmetic, (5) Elements of Euclid (Book 1), mensuration of plane surfaces and surveying, (6) Elements of science. The Middle Schools are situated at Dibrugarh, Sadiya, Barbarua, North Lakhimpur, and Dhakuakhana.

Primary education is divided into upper and lower, but the proportion of boys in upper primary schools is less than three per cent. of the total number of boys in primary schools, and this class of school, like the middle vernacular, is slowly dying out. The course of study in lower primary schools includes reading, writing, dictation, simple arithmetic and the geography of Assam. In upper primary schools the course is somewhat more advanced, and includes part of the first book of Euclid, mensuration, and a little history. The standard of instruction given still leaves much to be desired, but efforts have been recently made to improve it, by raising the rates of pay given to the masters. Fixed pay is now awarded at average rates of Rs. 8 per mensem for certificated, and Rs. 5 per mensem for uncertificated teachers, supplemented by capitation grants at rates ranging from 3 annas to 6 annas for pupils in the three highest classes. The number of Schools of each grade, and the number of pupils reading in them will be found in Table XXIII.

The only medical school in the Province is situated at Dibrugarh. The nucleus of the fund required for its construction and maintenance was found in a legacy of Rs. 50,000, which was bequeathed for this purpose

by Dr. Berry White, a gentleman who had resided for many years in the district, and was largely interested in tea planting. The school, which is under the management of the Civil Surgeon, was opened in 1900. The course extends over a period of four years, and the pupils are taught up to the standard of a civil hospital assistant. It is largely attended, but most of the students are either Muhammadans or Bengalis, as the school has but few attractions for Assamese Hindus. There is also a survey school at Dibrugarh in which villagers receive a training which qualifies them for the post of village accountant or mandal. In addition to the village schools under Government management, boys living in the Buddhist villages are generally taught by the local priest how to read and write. The difficult Burmese character is, however, the one in which they usually receive instruction, so that they do not derive as much benefit from their labours as they might. As in the other plains districts of the Province female education has made very little progress, and the number of girls under instruction is less than one per cent. of the total number of school-going age.

**Printing
Presses.**

In 1903-04, there were four printing presses in the district, at two of which weekly papers in English were published.

Medical staff

The district contains seven dispensaries, and is in the medical charge of the Civil Surgeon who is stationed at Dibrugarh. In addition to supervising the work done at these institutions, that officer is also Superintendent of the Berry White Medical School and of the Jail,

he controls and inspects the Vaccination Department, and is required to visit and report on all tea gardens on which the death-rate for the previous year has exceeded seven per cent.

The conditions under which the people pass their days are far from conducive to a long mean duration of life. Their houses are small, dark, and ill-ventilated, and the rooms in summer must be exceedingly close and oppressive. They are built upon low mud plinths, and are in consequence extremely damp, and the inmates instead of sleeping on beds or bamboo platforms which would cost them nothing to provide, often pass the night on a mat on the cold floor. Their attire, which is suitable enough for the warm weather, offers but a poor resistance to the cold and fogs of winter, and many lives are annually lost from diseases brought on by chills, which might have been avoided by the purchase of a cheap woollen jersey. The houses are buried in groves of fruit trees and bamboos, which afford, indeed, a pleasant shade, but act as an effective barrier to the circulation of the air, and increase the humidity of the already over-humid atmosphere. Sanitary arrangements there are none; the rubbish is swept up into a corner and allowed to rot with masses of decaying vegetation, and the complete absence of latrines renders the neighbourhood of the village a most unsavoury place. The water-supply is generally bad, and is drawn either from shallow holes, from rivers, or from tanks in which the villagers wash their clothes and persons. All of these are factors which contribute to produce a high mortality,

Absence of
rural sanitation.

and there can be little doubt that, if the people could only be induced to observe even the simpler laws of health, the existing death-rate could be considerably reduced.

In comparison with Central and Lower Assam, Lakhimpur is, however, a very healthy district. The greater part of it consists of a wide plain lying south of the Brahmaputra, and for some reason or another it would seem that the south bank of the river, except in those parts where the Assam range projects into the valley, is much healthier than the country which lies to the north. The cold weather is extremely fresh and bracing, and is prolonged to a much later date than is usual in most parts of India, the rainfall is abundant, and the mean temperature of the year distinctly low.

**Vital
statistics.**

Little light is thrown upon the conditions of the district by the returns of births and deaths as they are so incomplete as to be practically useless. Vital statistics are reported by the *gaobura* or village headman to the mandal of the circle, this report being in theory submitted every second week. In practice they were received at much longer intervals, as the *gaobura* was an unpaid servant of Government, and not very amenable to discipline. It has recently been decided to allot to each *gaobura* $2\frac{2}{3}$ acres of land revenue free, and it will now be possible to enforce a stricter adherence to the rules. Between 1891 and 1901, with a rapidly growing population, the birth rate recorded on the mean population of the decade was 25 per mille, the death-rate 27 per mille, and it is obvious that both of these figures must

have been very much below the truth. In 1903, the birth-rate was 28 per mille, the death-rate 22 per mille, figures which, imperfect though they are, tend to confirm the view that the general health of the district is fairly good.

Fever and bowel complaints are the forms which death most often takes in Lakhimpur, at any rate according to the official returns. These returns are, however, so incomplete, and so little reliance can be placed on the diagnosis of the reporting agency, that the figures hardly repay examination. Most fatal illnesses are accompanied by a rise in temperature, and the villagers, in consequence, ascribe many deaths to fever, which in reality are due to some other and specific form of disease. Epidemics of cholera from time to time produce a high mortality, for, though it is apparently endemic in the district, it occasionally breaks out with quite exceptional violence.

Causes of mortality.

The abstract in the margin shows the recorded death-rate from this cause in the years when cholera was most prevalent. Small-pox also appears from time to time in a virulent form. The highest death-rates per mille recorded from this disease during recent years were 4·2 in 1896 and 2·3 in 1897. Vaccination, has, however, made considerable progress amongst the people, and small-pox is not as a rule responsible for many deaths.

Cholera.	
Death-rate	
per mile.	
1886	... 5·7
1888	... 5·6
1889	... 5·8
1895	... 5·4

The most common form of fever is a quotidian fever of malarial origin, but tertian and quartan fevers also occur. Dysentery and diarrhoea, which are generally

Other diseases.

caused by variations in the temperature and impure food and water, are responsible for many deaths. Skin diseases and worms are very common, but goitre and elephantiasis are seldom seen. Venereal diseases are common in Dibrugarh, and amongst the immigrant population, but are said to be rare amongst the Assamese. Plague made its first appearance in the Brahmaputra Valley in May 1903. The first case occurred in that portion of the Dibrugarh bazar which is inhabited by Marwari merchants, who import large quantities of grain, and it is supposed that it was through this grain that the plague bacillus was brought into the town. Altogether 37 cases with 28 deaths were reported, the last case occurring in June 1903. Since that date the disease has not made its appearance in any portion of the district. A special medical officer was appointed to have charge of the preventive operations, vigilance committees were formed in Dibrugarh, and every endeavour was made to gain the sympathy and co-operation of the people.

**Native
methods of
midwifery.**

But if the majority of people leave the world without the assistance of a doctor, the same must be said of the way in which they make their entry into it, and it is to be feared that owing to the absence of properly qualified assistance, there is considerable preventible mortality alike amongst mothers and infants. There are very few professional midwives amongst the Assamese, and a woman in her confinement is generally attended by her relatives or friends. In difficult cases they can render little help, and recourse is had to

Heaven for assistance. A goat or duck is sacrificed, and *mantras* are tied round the neck and arm of the woman, or inscribed on a brass vessel which is placed where her eyes can fall upon it. In cases of false presentation attempts are made to drag the child out by anything that offers, and the abdomen is kneaded in the hope that the foetus may be expelled. In the absence of medical aid, and this aid is seldom to be obtained, the mother in such cases generally dies. The confinement sometimes takes place in a small hut which has been specially constructed for the purpose, and the patient's bed generally consists of an old mat laid on the floor. The unfortunate mother receives practically no assistance; if the labour is a natural one all is well, but if complications arise, the case has usually a fatal termination. Many lives are also lost owing to a disregard of the rules of cleanliness which are of such paramount importance in these cases. The nucleus of a professional midwife class is, however, to be found in the *bejinis* or female doctors, women who receive a small remuneration for attending cases and practise beyond the limits of their own villages.

Though there can be little doubt that many lives are annually lost which could be saved by proper treatment, it is satisfactory to know that of recent years there has been a great increase in the facilities for obtaining medical aid, and in the extent to which the people avail themselves of the advantages now offered to them. From the following abstract it appears that for every patient treated in 1881, there were 17 in 1901, while the

Increase in
facilities for
obtaining
medical aid.

number of operations performed rose from 106 to 865.

				Dispensaries	Patients
				No.	treated.
					No.
1881	...	...	...	8	2,990
1894	...	...	...	2	10,834
1901	...	...	...	6	52,196

In 1904 it was decided to open five new dispensaries in the district.

The principal dispensaries are those situated at Dibrugarh and North Lakimpur, which had a daily average attendance in 1903 of 173, and 38, respectively. The Dibrugarh hospital is a large and very popular institution, containing no less than 98 beds, which in 1908 had a daily average of 68 in-patients. The diseases for which treatment is most commonly applied are malarial fevers, dysentery and diarrhœa, worms, skin diseases, and rheumatic affections. The number of patients treated at each dispensary in 1900 and the succeeding years will be found in Table XXVI. In considering these figures, it must be borne in mind that over a third of the total population of the district are living on the tea gardens. On every garden there is a hospital and dispensary, a liberal store of medicines and medical comforts, and a native doctor who works under the supervision of a European medical man, so that the number of patients treated in the Government dispensaries are only drawn from two-thirds of the total population.

Surveys.

A revenue survey on the scale of one inch to the mile was carried out in the district between 1866 and 1873. In 1884 a topographical map on the scales of four

miles to the inch was published, and it was revised and brought up to date in 1896. Between 1st October 1891 and 30th September 1892 the professional party carried out a cadastral survey on the scale of 16 inches to the mile, but their operations only covered some 270 square miles, and since their departure there has been a large extension of cultivation. A further area of 64 square miles has in consequence been surveyed by local agency, but in spite of this a very large area still remained unmapped in 1904.

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THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
ROYAL
ANTHROPOLOGICAL
INSTITUTE
OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND IRELAND
PART I
1906
LONDON
PUBLISHED BY THE
INSTITUTE
11, BEDFORD SQUARE, W.C.1
1906

STATEMENT.—A.

LIST OF TEA GARDENS.

Serial Number.	NAME OF GARDEN.	NAME OF OWNER.	Manse in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisional head quarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.	REMARKS.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	DIBRUGAR SUB-DIVISION.			Miles.				
1	Athabari	Jakal Tea Co., London	Lahol	7	Included in Lahol.	In Lahol.	in Lahol.	
2	Begmura	Jalpur Tea Co., Ltd.	Jalpur	86	Do.	Do.	Do.	
3	Bahjan	Bahjan Tea Co., Ltd.	Tengabhat	28	1,303	883	1,875	
4	Bahjan	Eastern Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Bohmoria	18	Included in Bohmoria	In Bohmoria	Bohmoria	
5	Bansbari	Mr. H. L. Smith	Larna	13	98	40	Not available.	
6	Barbam	Junctoli Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	33	Included in Junctoli.	In Junctoli.	559	
7	Barbari	Rajmal Tea Co., Ltd.	Dibrugarh	2	1,768	368	775	
8	Barbarus	Upper Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Jamira and Khowang (Mankata).	7	1,100	696		
9	Bardubi	Bardubi Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola.	52	2,603	940	1,353	
10	Basaltoli	Upper Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangagora	35	Included in Rangagora.	In Rangagora.	76	
11	Basjan	Ram Kanta Barua, Golap Chandra Barua and Ankarnal and Murlidhar Agarwalla.	Ujan Nakhankhola.	38	497	130		
12	Bhaman	Dihing Co., Ltd.	Khowang	24	661	266	227	
13	Bibhatting	Dr. D. O'Brien	Jamira	6	905	430	404	
14	Bisakuri	Dum Dum Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	45	3,077	2,548	2,423	
15	Bogjan	Messrs. Macneill & Co.	Do.	36	Included in Dihing	In Dihing	tarung.	
16	Bogpara	Jakal Tea Co., London	Lahol	5	Included in Bokel.	In Bokel.	1,053	
17	Bokel	Jakal Tea Co., London	Do.	5	5,724	1,190	141	
18	Bolye	Eastern Assam Tea Co.	Mankata (Khami-kar).	9	1,873	123		
19	Budlabhatta	Budlabhatta Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	42	5,126	800	1,450	
20	Cacharbari	British Indian Tea Co., Ltd.	Mankata (Khami-kar).	4	Included in Sema.	In Sema.	158	
21	Chabua	Chabua Tea Co., Ltd.	Chabua	17	3,296	1,194	1,759	
22	Chaulkhoa	Jakal Tea Co., London	Mankata (Khami-kar).	3	Included in Bokel.	In Bokel.		
23	Do.	Messrs. King, Hamilton & Co.	Do.	3	395	230	383	
24	Chota Deyvan	Mr. J. James Haly	Larna	11	Included in Lepetkata.	In Lepetkata.		

Includes figures for Lohitkata

Cots 6 and 7 include figures for Samdang.

Includes figures for Bogpara, Chaulkhoa (23), Hloiting, Jaka Naypa and Tumena.

LIST OF TEA GARDENS.—Continued.

Serial Number	NAME OF GARDEN.	NAMES OF OWNERS.	Manza in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from subdivisions head quarters.	Area in acres on December 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant (both mature and immature) on December 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.	REMARKS.
1		3	4	5	6	7	8	9
25	Chota Hapjan	Messrs. R. G. Shaw & Co., London	Ujan Nakhanthola	37	3,317	953	1,562	
26	Chota Mantata	Jakal Tea Co., London	Mantata	7	Included	in Rowmari.		
27	Chota Tingri	Upper Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Tengakhat	35	294	200	170	
28	Chowkidighi	Messrs. J. Anton and E. A. Collie	Dibrugarh and Mantata.	1	1,711	664	966	
29	Dahotia	Tengri Tea Co., Ltd.	Tengakhat	38	Included	in Hugrijan.	745	
30	Deobal	Planters' Stores and Agency Co., Ltd.	Do.	37	2,124	570		
31	Deomulli	Deomulli Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhanthola	53	2,012	1,012	1,691	
32	Dewan	Eastern Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Larna	13	225	173	238	
33	Dhodam	Pakhajan Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhanthola	44	1,664	1,213	1,776	
34	Dholla	Messrs. R. G. Shaw & Co., London	Do.	58	3,105	184	350	
35	Digholbari	Mr. W. S. Warren	Jamira	34	154	117	171	
36	Dighuitarung	Messrs. Macneill & Co.	Ujan Nakhanthola	38	3,996	600	986	
37	Dikam	Jakal Tea Co., London	Chabua	12	7,539	1,001	1,529	
38	Dinjan	Greenwood Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangagora	24	2,786	886	1,234	Includes figures for Menabari.
39	Ethelwold	Mr. J. Davidson	Dibrugarh	2	353	301	321	Includes figures for Bogjan.
40	Gopara	Babu Bipin Behari De	Rehmoria	8	825	125	43	
41	Greenwood	Greenwood Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	10	1,500	1,000	1,295	
42	Hansara	DumDuma Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhanthola	43	6,091	1,735	2,996	Includes figures for Mairaguri, Messajian and Pahukata.
43	Hapjan Parbat	Sewnarain and Sewnath	Jaipur	40	1,604	179	209	
44	Hatiali	Jakal Tea Co., London	Chabua	19	1,443	502	716	
45	Haveda	Babu Dhoriounrain Das	Ujan Nakhanthola	13	394	75	20	
46	Haselbank	Mr. J. Davidson	Lahol	33	1,637	398	286	
47	Hilika	Messrs. R. G. Shaw & Co., London	Ujan Nakhanthola	44	2,000	1,345	2,190	
48	Hloting	Jakal Tea Co., Ltd.	Chabua	17	Included	in Bokel.		
49	Hugrijan	Tingri Tea Co., Ltd.	Tengakhat	38	5,243	983	1,533	Includes figures for Dahotia.
50	Hukanguri	Messrs. R. G. Shaw & Co., London	Ujan Nakhanthola	40	3,544	992	1,903	Includes figures for Lahorijan.
51	Hukapukri	Jakal Tea Co., London	Rangagora	38	2,247	429	699	
52	Itakuli	Messrs. C. T. Strongways, Jas. Jamieson and M. Jamieson.	Do.	33	1,283	560	797	

53	Jaipur	Jaipur Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	56	5,616	706	922	Includes figures for Nagarnag, Namsang and Tipam.
54	Janki	Janki Tea Co., Ltd.	Mankata	5	1,472	493	508	Includes figure for Barman and Rajabari.
55	Juncotoli	Juncotoli Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	38	Included in	Lahol.		
56	Kailian	Kailian Tea Co., Ltd.	Begdang	31	491	453	695	
57	Kanjikho	Kanjikho Tea Co., Ltd.	Tengabhat	35	1,434	440	709	
58	Kyething	Kyething Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangasora	25	Included in	Paritola.		
59	Khamtigowali	Khamtigowali Tea Co., Ltd.	Mankata	54	778	402	589	
60	Khanikar	Khanikar Tea Co., Ltd.	Begdang	23	1,442	551	808	
61	Kharjan	Kharjan Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	50	2,196	1,076	1,964	Includes figures for Laina.
62	Khowang	Khowang Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	18	3,962	523	609	
63	Kotichuan	Kotichuan Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangasora	33	448	177	73	
64	Lahol	Lahol Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	6	3,232	981	715	Includes figures for Athabari, Kallian and Sherwood.
65	Lahorjan	Lahorjan Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangasora	51	Included in	Hukapukri.		
66	Laina	Laina Tea Co., Ltd.	Sakho	33	1,473	450	756	
67	Leadi	Leadi Tea Co., Ltd.	Makum	70	1,298	269	485	
68	Lengri	Lengri Tea Co., Ltd.	Gharbandi	18	1,869	367	490	Includes figures for Chota Dewan, and Medlabari.
69	Lepetkata	Lepetkata Tea Co., Ltd.	Jamira and Laina	9				
70								
71	Limburguri	Limburguri Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangasora	35	917	400	540	
72	Lohikata	Lohikata Tea Co., Ltd.	Dibragach	3	1,720	811	1,599	
73	Lonsaal	Lonsaal Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	43	4,402	1,670	1,551	Includes figures for Nagaghnli.
74	Majjan	Majjan Tea Co., Ltd.	Dibragach	6	Included in	Hansa		
75	Mairaguri	Mairaguri Tea Co., Ltd.	Rahmoria	43	1,537	675	735	
76	Makbari	Makbari Tea Co., Ltd.	Makum	13	5,125	1,864	1,984	
77	Makum	Makum Tea Co., Ltd.	Makum	61	Included in	Jepekata.		
78	Medlabari	Medlabari Tea Co., Ltd.	Mankata	8	Included in	Dignoli.		
79	Mendabari	Mendabari Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	43	Included in	Hansa		
80	Mesani	Mesani Tea Co., Ltd.	Dibragach	54	Included in	Rajabari.		
81	Mohanbari	Mohanbari Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	27	2,846	1,336	1,466	Includes figures for Pathalipam, Sepon (114) and Telakari.
82	Moran	Moran Tea Co., Ltd.	Dibragach and	4	1,206	493	489	
83	Mothola	Mothola Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	14	490	490	484	Includes figures for Sengdora.
84	Nadwa	Nadwa Tea Co., Ltd.	Bardang	7	Included in	Majja		
85	Nagaghnli	Nagaghnli Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	28	1,835	700	878	Includes figures for Sepon (115).
86	Nahorian and Dikbari	Nahorian and Dikbari Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	13	3,689	604	544	
87	Naharkatia	Naharkatia Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	26	801	476	682	
88	Naharoli	Naharoli Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	13				
89	Nakhroy	Nakhroy Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangasora	33	680	400	420	
90	Namrup	Namrup Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	43	3,846	588	549	
91	Namsang	Namsang Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	44	Included in	Jaipur.		
92	Nappa	Nappa Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	8	Included in	Bokel.		
93	Oaklands	Oaklands Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	104	1,895	608	871	
94	Pabhojan	Pabhojan Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	44	1,401	800	1,395	
95	Pahukata	Pahukata Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	43	Included in	Hansa		
96	Panabari	Panabari Tea Co., Ltd.	Bardang	16	148	41	29	Includes figures for Khamti-gowali.
97	Paritola	Paritola Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	23	6,105	1,615	1,676	
98	Pathalipam	Pathalipam Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	29	2,843	431	415	
99	Phukanbari	Phukanbari Tea Co., Ltd.	Gharbandi	23	4,024	1,576	1,597	
100	Powai	Powai Tea Co., Ltd.	Makum	55				

LIST OF TEA GARDENS.—Continued

Serial Number.	NAME OF GARDEN.	NAMES OF OWNERS.	Manus in which situated.	Approximate distance by road from sub-divisional head quarters.	Area in acres on Decem-ber 31st, 1903.	Area in acres under plant mature and in-clude 31st, 1903.	Labour force on December 31st, 1903.	REMARKS.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
101	Rajbari	Juntoli Tea Co.	Jaipur	Miles.	Included	in Juntoli.	980	Includes figures for Mohanbari.
102	Rajbari	M. Baruah	Dibrugarh	36	985	980	980	Includes figures for Basaltoli.
103	Rajbari	Eastern Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Lahol	4	1,948	376	450	Includes figures for Balijan (4).
104	Rangagora	Upper Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangagora	28	2,141	900	1,948	Includes figures for Chota Man-esta.
105	Ridgeway	Mr. W. S. Warren	Chabua	16	Included	in Sealhati.	883	Includes figures for Ridgeway.
106	Rohmoria	Eastern Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Rohmoria	18	2,388	1,048	704	
107	Romai	Estates of the late Capt. Butler, Messrs. J. H. Williamson, R. E. Major and others.	Madarkhat	18	1,577	469		
108	Rowmari	Jakai Tea Co., London	Jamira	7	1,444	886	1,087	
109	Rungliting	Mr. A. Want	Madarkhat	11	503	213	311	
110	Rungmala	Babu Mohendra Nath Mitra	Rohmoria	90	1,453	174	46	
111	Sandang	DumDuma Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	47	Included	in Bimkulpl.	2,453	
112	Sealhati	Mr. W. S. Warren	Chabua	16	1,970	970	1,416	
113	Sengdora	Upper Assam Tea Co., Ltd.	Bagdang	14	Included	in Nadwa.		
114	Sepon	Moran Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	33	Included	in Moran.		
115	Sepon	Dikhari Syndicate, Ltd.	Do.	34	Included	in Nabortani and Dikbari.		
116	Sesa	British India Tea Co., Ltd.	Manakia	7	1,083	605	787	
117	Sherewood	Jakai Tea Co., London	Lahol	6	Included	in Lahol.		
118	Singlian	Mr. D. H. P. Madden	Madarkhat	11	1,350	250	174	
119	Sookerating	Messrs. B. G. Shaw & Co., London	Ujan Nakhankhola	44	1,087	870	1,867	
120	Talap	Messrs. B. G. Shaw & Co., London	Do.	50	5,903	1,593	2,609	
121	Tannulbari	Harbilas Agarwala	Madarkhat	10	885	330	308	
122	Tara	Tara Tea Co., Ltd.	Ujan Nakhankhola	49	1,377	610	986	
123	Tarjan	Amalgamated Tea Estates Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	41	3,228	328	331	
124	Tekari	Moran Tea Co., Ltd.	Khowang	37	Included	in Moran.		
125	Thanal	Messrs. Macneil & Co., Calcutta	Rohmoria	14	3,340	500	479	
126	Tinasa	Jakai Tea Co., London	Madarkhat	5	3,374	800	441	
127	Tincharang	Dibhing Tea Co., Ltd.	Jaipur	48	Included	in Bokel.		
128	Tipam	Jaipur Tea Co., Ltd.	Do.	38	2,641	469	888	
129	Tiphat	Jakai Tea Co., London	Ujan Nakhankhola	48	Included	in Jaipur.	901	
130	Tithiwaru	Messrs. A. R. & R. H. McDermid.	Lahol	6	480	900	614	
131	Woodbine	Nakhuoy (Assam) Tea Co., Ltd.	Rangagora	30	1,460	468		

STATEMENT.—B.

List of Post offices.

Name of post office.	Mauza in which situated.	Name of post office.	Mauza in which situated.
Bedati	Narayanpur ...	Makum Junction ..	Ujan Nakhankhola.
Barbarua	Jamira	Margherita	Makum.
Bardalani	Bardalani	Namrup	Jaipur.
Barhapjan	Ujan Nakhankhola	North Lakhimpur ...	Lakhimpur.
Chabua	Bagdang	Oaklands	Lahool.
Dhakuakhana	Dhakuakhana ...	Panitola	Gharbandi.
Dibrugarh	Dibrugarh town ...	Pathalipam	Kadam.
Do. (Steamer ghat)	Do.		
Digboi	Makum	Rangagora*	Rangagora.
Dikam	Bagdang	Rihabari	Dibrugarh town.
Dum Duma*	Ujan Nakhankhola	Sadiya*	Sadiya.
Hulmarl	Lalukdalani	Silanihari	Naobaicha.
Jaipur	Jaipur	Sisi	Sisi.
Jakai	Mankata	Talasp	Saikhoe.
Kathalguri	Dhemaaji	Tengakhat	Tengakhat.
Kathani	Narayanpur	Tingkhong	Jaipur.
Khowang*	Khowang	Tinsukia	Rangagora.
Lahool —	Lahool	Tiphok	Ujan Nakhankhola.

* Combined post and telegraph office.

STATEMENT C.

List of villages in which there are three or more permanent shops.

Village.	Mauza.	Number of permanent Shops.	Village.	Mauza.	Number of permanent Shops.
DIBRUGARH SUBDIVISION.			Panimidh	Gharbandi ..	3
Alimurgaon ...	Madarkhat ...	3	Panitola	Bagdang ..	10
Bagaritalia ...	Rohmorla ...	3	Phakial	Phakial ..	3
Bairaginath ...	Sadiya ...	3	Romaigaon	Madarkhat ..	3
Balijan ..	Tengakhath ...	5	Sadiya	Sadiya ..	25
Bargaon ...	Sisi Lakhimpur	4	Saikhua	Saikhua ..	16
Bar Medhigaon ...	Sadiya ..	3	Sonawal	Khowang ..	4
Barlat ...	Rohmorla ...	3	Tengakhath	Tengakhath ...	7
Choikhama Bazar	Saikhua ...	6	Tinsukia	Ranggora ...	30
Dangori ...	Do. ...	3	NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION.		
Garparagaon ...	Rohmorla ...	3	Badati	Narayanpur...	5
Guijangaon ...	Ranggora ...	8	Baligaon	Dhakuakhana	3
Habichukgaon ...	Madarkhat ...	3	Bardalani	Bardalani ...	11
Hatkholu Chabua Hatghor	Bagdang ..	3	Bengali Line	Narayanpur...	4
Jakai Sesa ..	Dibrugarh Tehsil ...	3	Chaboti Faltogaon	Nakari ..	3
Julipathar ...	Gharbandi ...	3	Gohain Jamuguri	Dhakuakhana	3
Lengeri ...	Khowang ...	3	Jiamaria	Do. ...	4
Mahmari ...	Rohmorla ...	4	Kamalabari	Nakari ...	5
Margherita ...	Makum ...	6	Lechaigaon	Kamalabari...	5
Melengialgaon ...	Madarkhat ...	4	Nakari	Nakari ...	4
Nagaghuli ...	Dibrugarh ...	3	North Lakhimpur	Lakhimpur ..	—
Natunbari ...	Tengakhath ...	4	Rangajan	Nakari ..	4
Nij Bhaklajan ...	Gharbandi ...	3			

Statement.—D.

LIST OF MARKETS.

Place at which market held.	Maunsa or Tahsil.	Place at which market held.	Maunsa or Tahsil.	Place at which market held.	Maunsa or Tahsil.
<i>Dibrugarh Subdivision.</i>					
Balibazar or Tengibazar.	Saikhua.	Dumora	Madarkhat.	Tinsukia	Rangagora.
Baliyan	Bagdang.	Grahambazar—Held daily	Dibrugarh town	North Lakhimpur	Subdivision.
Barbarus	Dibrugarh Tahsil.	Guujan	Rangagora.	Barbam garden	Naobaicha.
Chabus	Bagdang.	Khatkhati	Khowang.	Barbil	Nakari.
Chadura	Chabus and Polonga.	Margherita	Makum.	Jorhati—Held daily	Naobaicha.
Chaikhama—Held every Saturday.	Saikhua.	Nagaghuli	Dibrugarh Tahsil.	North Lakhimpur	Lakhimpur.
Dighalibazar—Held daily	Dibrugarh town	Rowmari garden	Do.	Pathalipam garden	Kadam Pathalipam.
Dikam	Bagdang.	Sadiya—Held daily	Sadiya.	Salmari	Lalukdalani.
Dumduma	Ujan Nakhankhola.	Saikhua bazar	Saikhua.		
		Tengakhat	Tengakhat.		
		Tini Ali	Dibrugarh Tahsil.		

Where not otherwise specified these markets are held on Sunday.
A unit should be taken to be a mauza unless otherwise specified.

TABLE I.

Average maximum and minimum temperatures in Dibrugarh.

		January.	February.	March.	April	May.	June.	July.	August.	September	October.	November.	December.	Year.
Maximum	...	70°·9	73°·5	76°·4	79°·2	84°·4	87°·1	88°·3	87°·1	87°·1	84°·6	79°·0	73°·4	81°·1
Minimum	...	48°·6	58°·6	60°·3	64°·9	70°·1	73°·2	75°·6	76°·0	74°·4	69°·5	59°·7	50°·2	64°·7

Note.—The figures have been compiled on the data for 3 years.

TABLE II.

RAINFALL

The number of years on which the average is calculated is shewn in brackets below the name of each Station.

MONTHS	Average rainfall in inches.							
	Pathali- pam.	North Lakhim- pur.	Dhakua- khana.	Dibru- garh.	Dum- Duma.	Sadiya.	Jaipur.	Mar- gherita.
	(13 years.)	(28 years.)	(12 years.)	(39 years.)	(13 years.)	(30 years.)	(22 years.)	(16 years.)
January	...	1·84	1·88	1·20	1·49	1·42	1·65	2·14
February	...	2·82	2·28	2·21	2·53	2·86	2·91	3·12
March	...	4·57	4·62	4·96	5·54	6·64	6·77	7·84
April	...	9·38	10·24	10·19	9·84	10·34	10·29	10·66
May	...	18·37	18·50	13·02	14·18	12·62	12·43	11·99
June	...	29·89	22·87	17·72	18·26	14·55	15·27	15·04
July	...	86·08	21·83	16·86	20·01	19·68	18·99	17·86
August	...	30·29	20·47	15·83	18·66	15·61	16·47	17·02
September	...	24·59	17·33	11·99	18·61	10·62	11·32	11·40
October	...	8·57	6·54	6·38	6·05	3·92	4·61	8·91
November	...	0·58	0·85	0·46	1·11	0·43	0·93	0·61
December	...	0·98	0·66	0·65	0·88	0·45	0·61	0·52
Total of year	...	167·91	128·07	100·97	112·11*	99·14	102·25	99·83

* Does not agree with figure shewn on page 14 as the arrange has been revised since letter press was written.

TABLE III.

Distribution of Population by tahsils and mauzas.

Tahsil or Mauza.	Population in 1901.	Population in 1891.	Difference.	Area in square miles.	Popula- tion per square mile.	Number of persons censused on tea gardens.
Dibrugarh tahsil ...	83,412	58,699	+ 24,713	265.03	314	24,091
Howaog ...	13,116	9,025	+ 4,091	155.94	84	5,887
Bagdang ...	15,115	9,781	+ 5,334	80.55	187	3,903
Rohmorla ...	8,446	5,431	+ 3,015	47.81	176	4,366
Madarkhat ...	7,445	5,381	+ 2,064	38.66	192	2,941
Tengakhat ...	10,813	7,176	+ 3,637	83.81	129	4,875
Gharbandi ...	10,274	6,401	+ 3,873	57.60	178	6,458
Polonga and Chabua ...	7,556	4,803	+ 2,753	20.02	377	3,977
Jaipur ...	29,975	18,411	+ 11,564	356.70	84	6,037
Tipling and Tipling } Khiraaj }	8,757	1,909	+ 1,848	136.41	27	1,808
Buridihing }	1,619	1,289	+ 380	not avail- able	...	.....
Makum ...	9,481	4,758	+ 4,723	248.12	38	4,649
Phakial ...	1,081	955	+ 76	29.76	34	.....
Rangagora ...	9,380	5,719	+ 3,661	109.91	85	6,168
Ujan Nakhankhola ...	40,935	20,484	+ 20,451	284.88	143	30,544
Saikhua group ...	14,834	11,528	+ 3,306	191.31	77	9,773
Ujanbhati Sadiya ...	8,547	8,124	+ 423	78.08	109	.....
Sisi ...	4,401	4,254	+ 147	186.93	23	.....
Dhemaji ...	6,435	6,541	- 106	153.96	41	.....
Lakhimpur }	6,954	6,244	+ 710	66.19	105	.....
Khiraikhat }						
Gohaingaon ...	8,223	6,296	+ 1,927	133.55	61	273
Naobaicha ...	14,775	10,820	+ 3,955	186.87	79	8,308
Kadam ...	9,456	6,599	+ 2,857	154.51	61	2,701
Naokari and Kamalabari ...	10,554	8,271	+ 2,283	48.84	216	2,485
Bardalani ...	6,907	4,748	+ 2,159	115.97	59	1,012
Dhakuakhana ...	10,401	8,164	+ 2,237	104.78	99	.....
Narayanpur and } Khiraikhat }	10,930	7,667	+ 3,263	182.79	59	.....
Telahi Beteri ...	6,624	4,625	+ 1,999	93.53	70	.....
Total district ...	371,396	254,053	+ 117,343	4,529.00(a)	82	130,256

(a) The area of the district was furnished by the Survey Department and does not tally with the sum total of the areas of tahsils and mauzas as the latter figures were obtained from the District Officer.

NOTE.—Where not otherwise stated a unit should be taken to represent a mauza.

TABLE IV.

General Statistics of Population by subdivision.

			DIBRUGARH, SUBDIVISION.		NORTH LAKHIMPUR, SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.	
			Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Population	1901	...	154,511	132,061	44,848	39,976	199,359	172,037
	1891	...	102,902	87,717	33,502	29,932	136,404	117,649
	1881	...	128,143		53,750		96,335	83,558
	1872	...	44,386	37,723	20,306	18,852	64,692	56,575
Variation	{ 1891-1901...		+51,609	+44,344	+11,346	+10,044	+62,955	+54,388
	{ 1881-1891...		+64,476		+9,684		+40,069	+34,091
	{ 1872-1881...		+44,034		+14,592		+81,643	+26,983
1901.								
Religion—								
Total Hindus	...		141,891	123,742	35,861	31,990	177,752	155,732
Mahapurushas	...		24,447	22,988	7,954	7,300	32,401	30,283
Other Vaishnavas	...		25,580	21,882	15,342	11,587	40,922	33,469
Saktists	...		32,528	30,035	7,999	6,287	39,927	36,322
Sivaïtes	...		1,401	958	3,487	3,233	4,888	4,191
Muhammadans	...		6,257	3,519	1,218	981	7,475	4,450
Animistic	...		2,796	1,894	6,886	6,397	9,682	8,291
Total Chirstians	...		1,398	1,029	373	312	1,771	1,341
Anglican Communion	...		594	392	22	7	616	399
Baptist	...		59	218	240	199	299	417
Minor denominations	...		688	376	110	106	748	482
Other religions	...		2,169	1,877	510	348	2,679	2,223
Civil Condition—								
Unmarried	...		73,474	57,948	25,272	19,811	98,746	77,759
Married	...		69,770	58,920	16,760	15,365	86,530	74,285
Widowed	...		11,267	15,193	2,816	4,800	14,083	19,993
Literacy—								
Literate in Assamese	...		3,529	135	1,796	54	5,325	189
Do. in English	...		2,195	140	227	5	2,422	145
Illiterate	...		144,774	131,855	42,292	39,896	187,066	171,251
Languages Spoken—								
Assamese	...		49,630	46,353	23,754	26,378	73,384	72,731
Eastern Hindi	...		29,402	19,366	2,339	1,465	31,741	20,831
Bengali	...		36,428	36,683	3,567	3,113	39,995	39,796
Mundari	...		8,620	8,505	2,515	2,058	11,185	10,563
Miri	...		5,638	5,757	7,111	3,741	27,119	9,498

TABLE V.

Birth-place, race, caste, and occupation by subdivisions.

	DIBRUGAHH, SUBDIVISION.		NORTH LAKHIMPUR, SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.	
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH PLACE—						
Born in district ...	73,632	69,797	31,428	30,131	105,060	99,928
" " other parts of Province ...	6,574	1,643	3,412	1,924	9,986	3,566
" " Chota Nagpur ...	29,287	31,114	5,391	4,488	34,678	35,602
" " other parts of Bengal ...	22,749	13,494	1,782	1,146	24,481	14,640
" " United Provinces ...	6,708	2,709	266	120	6,974	2,829
" " Central Provinces ...	7,852	9,172	1,437	1,522	9,289	10,694
" " Nepal ...	2,591	826	525	88	3,116	914
" Elsewhere ...	5,118	3,807	657	557	5,775	3,864
RACE AND CASTE—						
Ahom ...	23,142	22,992	6,561	6,355	29,703	29,347
Bauri ...	2,641	3,561	147	204	2,788	3,765
Bhuiya ...	3,620	4,024	403	375	4,023	4,399
Bhumij ...	3,453	3,683	523	479	3,976	4,162
Brahman ...	2,159	689	635	375	2,794	1,014
Chhatri ...	2,025	2,943	454	208	2,479	3,151
Chutiya ...	5,361	4,407	3,957	3,828	9,318	8,230
Eurasian ...	27	10	...	...	27	10
European (a) ...	322	109	28	10	350	119
Goala ...	2,550	2,121	313	243	2,863	2,364
Kachari ...	11,225	9,380	2,486	2,072	13,711	11,452
Kalita ...	1,289	520	2,021	1,582	3,310	2,102
Kamar ...	2,730	3,094	844	863	3,074	3,457
Kayastha ...	936	626	110	72	1,046	698
Kewat and Kaibartta ...	1,038	1,094	1,528	1,401	2,566	2,495
Koch and Rajbansi ...	2,272	1,415	2,209	1,915	4,481	3,330
Miri ...	5,340	5,753	6,940	6,878	12,280	12,631
Munda ...	12,514	12,043	2,358	2,764	15,372	14,807
Nadiyal ...	5,632	3,320	2,619	2,345	8,251	6,165
Oron ...	3,463	2,902	835	789	4,298	3,691
Santal ...	9,036	6,030	1,342	1,106	10,378	7,136
Tanti ...	2,925	2,648	216	194	3,141	2,842
OCCUPATION—						
Workers ...	not	available.	not	available.	139,223	108,197
Dependents ...	"	"	"	"	123,976	97,600
TOTAL SUPPORTED—						
Landholders ...	65,142	59,631	31,929	30,823	98,071	90,454
Tenants ...	2,248	2,166	902	778	3,150	2,944
Garden labourers ...	57,607	56,636	7,270	6,839	64,877	63,475
General labourers ...	2,247	2,010	154	106	2,401	2,116

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE VI.

Vital Statistics.

Year.	Population under registra- tion in 1901.	Ratio of births per mille.	Ratio of deaths per mille.	RATIO OF DEATHS PER MILLE FROM			
				Cholera.	Small-pox	Fever.	Bowels. Complaints.
1901	... 371,396	26·28	24·11	2·18	0·33	10·60	4·79
1902	... 371,396	26·07	22·14	1·16	0·03	9·19	4·55
1903	... 371,396	28·04	22·22	0·49	0·02	10·20	4·50
1904	... 371,396	28·38	23·52	0·44	0·16	11·28	4·49
1905	...						
1906	...						
1907	..						
1908	...						
1909	...						
1910	...						
1911	..						
1912	...						

TABLE VII.
Crop Statistics.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
TEA.												
DIBRUGARH—SUBDIVISION.												
Total District.	235,236	247,619	253,087	257,331								
Total cropped area	128,984	136,225	141,910	147,556								
Total rice	6,399	6,842	6,780	8,012								
Mustard	3,975	5,410	4,746	3,469								
Sugarcane	2,365	5,838	4,613	6,149								
Pulse	92,502	93,310	96,189	91,605								
All other crops												
TEA.												
DIBRUGARH—SUBDIVISION.												
Number of Gardens	138	134	131	130								
Area	171,147	173,268	176,414	183,457								
Area under plant	60,176	59,994	60,247	61,610								
Output in lbs.	23,054,843	23,499,794	26,209,046	27,076,381								
Labour force*	123,203	98,897	86,550	89,670								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year	8,051	...	9,231	7,968								
NORTH LAKHIMPUR—SUB-DIVISION.												
Number of Gardens	14	13	13	13								
Area	21,972	21,327	23,927	25,024								
Area under plant	8,514	8,999	9,077	9,081								
Output in lbs.	3,503,503	3,408,694	3,534,388	3,607,857								
Labour force*	16,783	12,324	11,556	11,179								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year	843	...	528	887								
TOTAL DISTRICT—												
Number of Gardens	152	147	144	143								
Area	192,419	194,635	199,631	218,491								
Area under plant	67,227	67,321	67,689	68,990								
Area held by Europeans	1,463	1,673	1,635	1,601								
Area held by Natives	26,538,846	26,908,478	28,743,643	30,684,368								
Output in lbs.	139,996	101,421	100,106	100,849								
Labour force*	8,894	...	9,789	8,863								
Labourers including dependents imported during the year.												

* Figures for 1902-03 and the subsequent years relate to the period from 1st July to 30th June.

NOTE. The tea statistics are compiled for the calendar year and as such the figures relate to 1901 and the subsequent calendar years.

TABLE
Reserved

Name of Reserve.	Area in Sq. miles.	Character of Forests.		
			1900-01.	1901-02.
			Rs,	Rs.
North Lak- him pur Range.	{ Bharsloah ... 8	Plains and low hills, evergreen forests partially stocked, containing a few Uriam and Otenga.	6	128
	{ Kadam ... 21	Ditto ditto ...	Nil.	Nil.
Dibrugarh Range.	{ Dibru ... 88	Flat country, covered with evergreen forest, containing Ajhar, Sam and Hollock.	6	75
	{ Jakai ... 19	Flat country. Evergreen forest, one quarter stocked with Nahor.	622	614
	{ Dihingmukh 21	Flat country. Evergreen forests throughout containing Uriam, Nahor and Ajhar	121	176
Makum Range.	{ Jaipur ... 39	Low hills, one quarter partially stocked with Nahor	601	181
	{ Upper Dihing, Western Block } 144	$\frac{1}{2}$ plains, $\frac{1}{2}$ low hills covered with evergreen forest with patches of Nahor throughout but predominating in the S. W.	255	326
		{ Upper Dihing, Eastern Block. }	Ditto with less Nahor throughout.	

TABLE
Outturn and Value

DETAILS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
RESERVED FORESTS.				
Area in Sq. miles ...	340	340	340	340
Outturn (Government and purchaser only).				
Timber ... cft.	12,982	16,400	7,400	870
Fuel ... "	1,162	..	192	192
UNCLASSIFIED FORESTS.				
Area in Sq. miles ...	2,512	2,499	3,099	3,062
Outturn (Government and purchaser only).				
Timber ... cft.	455,822	504,457	528,425	584,623
Fuel ... "	156,178	64,449	52,379	87,955
Rubber ... Rs.	29,980	9,706	15,895	43,844
Forest receipts ... "	80,961	66,667	84,046	124,267
Forest expenditure ... "	32,545	28,895	26,726	26,573
Balance ... "	48,416	37,772	57,320	97,694

VIII.

Forests.

RECEIPT.

1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	19 5 06.	1906-07.	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs	Rs.
Nil.	Nil.								
6	Nil.								
42	8								
504	Nil.								
22	21								
52	6								
42	123								

IX.

of Forest Produce.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906 07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE X.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee at selected marts.

			DIBRUGARH.			NORTH LAKHIMPUR.		
			Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.	Common rice.	Salt.	Mati-kalai.
1880	{ 2nd week of February	...	10	6	11	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	10	6	16	...	...	...
1890	{ 2nd week of February	...	13	8	16	14	8	13
	{ 2nd week of August	...	12	8	14	12	8	13
1900	{ 2nd week of February	...	12	8	14	13	8	14
	{ 2nd week of August	...	11	9	11½	10	8	10
1901	{ 2nd week of February	...	10	8	10	10	8	14
	{ 2nd week of August	...	9	8	12	7	8	8
1902	{ 2nd week of February	...	11½	8	13	13	8	14
	{ 2nd week of August	...	10½	8	13	9	8	13
1903	{ 2nd week of February	..	11½	8	11½	11	8	13
	{ 2nd week of August	..	9½	10	12	9	9	11
1904	{ 2nd week of February	...	12	10	13	13	10	13
	{ 2nd week of August	...	13	10	12	12	10	13
1905	{ 2nd week of February	...	14	10	14	14	10	16
	{ 2nd week of August	...						
1906	{ 2nd week of February	..						
	{ 2nd week of August	...						
1907	{ 2nd week of February	...						
	{ 2nd week of August	...						
1908	{ 2nd week of February	..						
	{ 2nd week of August	..						
1909	{ 2nd week of February	..						
	{ 2nd week of August	..						
1910	{ 2nd week of February	...						
	{ 2nd week of August	...						
1911	{ 2nd week of February	...						
	{ 2nd week of August	...						
1912	{ 2nd week of February	...						
	{ 2nd week of August	...						

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DIBRUGARH SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158, and 159	10	10	7	7	5	4		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquility &c.	9	5	12	11	6	4		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide sections 302-304, 307, 308, and 396	9	2	12	7	7	5		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	27	21	22	20	27	16		
(v) Serious criminal force. Sections 353, 354, 356, and 357	3	3	2	2	3	3		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	13	7	7	4	7	6		
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40	26	2	12	6	17	4		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449-452, 454, 455 and 457-460	106	11	101	28	66	13		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sections 341-344	7	3	4	..	2	1		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person or property	3	3	..	..	3	3		
(xii) Theft, section 379 and 382	180	75	181	98	141	69		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414	16	15	38	30	29	26		
(xiv) Lurking and Criminal house trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448	26	17	22	14	18	14		
(xv) Other minor offences against property	16	7	7	5	8	5		
NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159	2	1	8	5	1	1		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquility &c.	4	1	4	3	2	2		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 396	4	..	2	1	3	2		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335	7	4	6	3	3	1		
(v) Serious Criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357	3	2	..	..	5	2		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person	4	2	4	2	2	2		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 and 398	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal. Sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 and 435-40	15	3	11	1	13	1		

XL

and Civil Justice by subdivisions.

[illegible]

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUB-DIVISION—(concl'd.)								
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass. Sections 449-453, 454, 455, and 457-460 ..	28	4	15	4	13	...		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Section 341-344 ..	4	..	5	2	4	2		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person or property ..	54	29	42	13	30	14		
(xii) Theft. Sections 379 and 382 ..	6	5	9	9	8	7		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	7	3	4	3	3	2		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	2	1	..	..	1	..		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..								
DISTRICT TOTAL.								
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.								
Number of cases.								
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sections 143-153, 157, 158 and 159 ..	12	11	15	12	6	5		
(ii) Other offences against the State, Public tranquility, &c. ..	13	6	16	14	8	6		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide. Sections 302-304, 307, 308 and 309 ..	13	2	14	8	10	7		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333 and 335 ..	34	25	28	23	30	17		
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357 ..	6	5	2	2	8	5		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person ..	17	9	11	6	9	8		
(vii) Dacoity. Sections 395, 397 & 398 ..	..	..	..	..	..	..		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing poisoning or maiming any animal sections 270, 281, 283, 423, 429, 430-433, and 435-40 ..	41	5	23	7	30	5		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass. Sections 449-453, 454, 455 and 457-460 ..	134	15	116	32	79	13		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement. Section 341-344 ..	11	3	9	2	6	3		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person or property ..	3	3	..	..	3	3		
(xii) Theft Sections 379 and 382 ..	234	104	223	110	171	83		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property. Sections 411 and 414 ..	23	20	47	39	37	33		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass. Sections 453, 456, 447 and 448 ..	43	20	26	17	21	16		
(xv) Other minor offences against property ..	18	8	7	5	9	5		
CIVIL JUSTICE.								
Number of suits for money and moveables ..	..	1,375	..	1,379	..	..		
Title and other suits ..	..	76	..	86	..	..		
Rent suits ..	..	29	..	18	..	..		

XI.- contd.

and Civil Justice by subdivisions.

[illegible]

TABLE
*Fluctuations in
Proportion of fluctuating*

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Aores.	Aores.	Aores.	Aores.
Dibrugarh Subdivision—				
Settled area	817,550	328,084	328,337	336,367
Area excluded from settlement ...	5,508	5,857	6,917	6,841
Area included in settlement ...	10,599	12,762	11,795	14,009
Revenue demand ... Rs.	4,01,266	4,13,660	4,22,101	4,38,303
North Lakhimpur Subdivision—				
Settled area	79,359	82,396	85,891	88,042
Area excluded from settlement ...	5,997	6,191	7,144	10,267
Area included in settlement ...	8,923	11,048	10,090	11,272
Revenue demand ... Rs.	1,43,772	1,49,551	1,56,950	1,61,623
Total District—				
Settled area	396,909	405,480	414,228	424,409
Area excluded from settlement ...	11,505	12,048	14,061	17,108
Area included in settlement ...	19,522	23,810	21,885	25,281
Revenue demand ... Rs.	5,45,038	5,63,211	5,79,051	5,99,926

TABLE
Miscellaneous

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Dibrugarh subdivision.				
Elephants	2,350	9,792	11,085	2,160
Fisheries	5,415	6,244	5,544	7,588
Poll-tax	5,919	6,100	6,723	7,106
Coal	31,383	33,721	28,881	36,313
Mineral Oil	5,500	5,500	6,032	3,750
Total Revenue ..	56,623	63,201	62,337	60,120
North Lakhimpur subdivision.				
Elephants	7,033	537	...	5,200
Fisheries	1,033	1,732	2,401	1,932
Poll-tax	622	590	614	626
Total Revenue ..	8,829	3,072	3,271	7,891
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Elephants	9,383	10,329	11,035	7,360
Fisheries	6,448	7,976	7,945	9,520
Poll-tax	6,541	6,690	7,337	7,732
Coal	31,383	33,721	28,881	36,313
Mineral Oil	5,500	5,500	6,032	3,750
Other heads	6,197	2,057	4,378	3,336
Total Revenue ..	65,452	66,273	65,608	63,011

XII.

settled area.	} Dibrugarh subdivision 1'4.
area to settled area in 1903-04	
	} North Lakhimpur Subdivision 38'6.

[illegible]

XIII.

Land Revenue.

[illegible]

TABLE

Finance

PRINCIPAL HEADS.				1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue	...	...	...	8,14,426	5,95,306	6,29,148	6,39,359
Provincial rates	...	...	...	21,715	44,216	46,621	47,450
Judicial stamps	...	...	...	20,508	37,128	37,076	37,690
Non judicial stamps	...	...	...	11,762	25,684	24,925	24,676
Opium	...	...	...	4,54,585	5,34,877	5,11,069	5,11,643
Country spirits	...	...	...	53,708	1,65,906	2,01,772	2,10,793
Ganja	...	...	...	19,762	53,664	56,121	46,017
Other heads of excise	...	...	...	19,754	4,844	5,058	3,914
Assessed taxes	...	...	...	25,095	52,236	52,406	59,582
No. of Assessess per 1000 of population	...	...	...	2	4	4	4
Forests	...	...	...	23,322	80,961	66,667	84,046
Registration	...	...	...	407	1,195	1,234	1,239
TOTAL				9,65,134	15,96,017	16,32,097	16,66,409

XIV.

Receipts.

1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
6,59,182							
46,905							
37,249							
29,514							
5,29,405							
1,98,955							
53,711							
3,614							
49,784							
2							
1,24,267							
1,400							
17,33,936							

TABLE

Land

PARTICULARS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
DIBRUGARH SUBDIVISION—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	117,967	122,038	124,743	130,790
Held on ordinary tenures ...	115,589	120,641	123,354	129,436
Held revenue-free (Lakhiraj) ...	1,869	388	380	386
Held at half rates (Nisfikhiraj) ...	1,009	1,009	1,009	968
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	190,886	191,352	193,682	195,970
Area of fee simple and commuted grants	107,280	107,280	107,280	107,280
Area settled on 30 years lease ...	58,114	58,326	60,226	61,826
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	25,492	25,746	26,876	26,864
Total land settled under other tenures ...	8,697	9,694	9,712	9,607
Total settled area of Subdivision ...	317,550	323,084	328,337	336,367
Total unsettled area of Subdivision ...	1,623,870	1,618,036	1,612,783	1,604,753
NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION—				
Total lands settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	54,255	57,226	60,717	62,761
Held on ordinary tenures ...	53,372	56,343	59,834	61,868
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj) ...	610	610	610	610
Held at half rates (Nisfikhiraj) ...	273	273	273	273
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	22,448	22,491	22,491	22,488
Area of fee simple and commuted grants	10,057	10,057	10,057	10,057
Area settled on 30 years lease ...	10,485	10,525	10,525	10,525
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	1,906	1,909	1,909	1,906
Total land settled under other tenures ...	2,656	2,679	2,683	2,802
Total settled area of Subdivision ...	79,359	82,396	85,891	88,041
Total unsettled area of Subdivision ...	672,001	668,964	665,469	663,319
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Total land settled for cultivation of ordinary crops ...	172,222	179,264	185,460	193,541
Held on ordinary tenures ...	168,961	176,984	183,188	191,804
Held revenue free (Lakhiraj) ...	1,979	998	990	996
Held at half rates (Nisfikhiraj) ...	1,282	1,282	1,252	1,241
Total land settled for cultivation of special staples ...	213,334	213,843	216,873	218,458
Area of fee simple and commuted grants	117,337	117,337	117,337	117,337
Area settled on 30 years lease ...	68,599	68,851	70,761	72,351
Area held under ordinary rules or re-settled on expiry of 30 years lease ...	27,398	27,655	28,285	28,770
Total land settled under other tenures ...	11,353	12,373	12,395	12,409
Total settled area of the district ...	396,909	405,480	414,228	424,408
Total unsettled area of the district ...	2,295,571	2,287,000	2,278,252	2,268,072

[illegible]

TABLE XVa.

Settled and unsettled area of each mauza or tahsil in 1902-03.

NAME OF MAUZA OR TAHSIL.				Total area in square miles.	Total unsettled area in square miles.	REMARKS.
DIBRUGARH SUBDIVISION.						
Dibrugarh tahsil	..	...		190	27	Includes 20 square miles of reserved forests.
Bagdang Mauza	...	...		63	28	
Buridihing "	...	...		153	152	Includes 152 square miles of reserved forests.
Chabua "	...	...		14	1	
Dhemaji "	...	...		154	147	
Gharbandi "	...	...		58	31	
Jaipur "	...	...		357	207	Includes 106 square miles of reserved forests.
Khowang "	...	...		156	128	
Madarkhat "	...	...		39	21	
Makum "	...	...		43	16	Includes 6 square miles of reserved forests.
Phakial "	...	...		22	14	Includes 8 square miles of reserved forests.
Palonga "	...	...		6	1	
Rangagora "	...	...		54	29	
Rohmorla "	...	...		25	7	
Sadiya "	...	...		78	74	
Saikhua "	...	...		191	168	
Sisi "	...	...		187	183	
Tengakhat "	...	...		89	64	
Tipling "	...	...		136	132	Includes 18 square miles of reserved forests.
Ujan Nakhankhola	...	...		202	128	
NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION.						
Bardalani Mauza	...	...		116	106	
Dhakuakhana "	...	...		185	174	
Gohaingaon "	...	...		134	119	
Kadam "	...	...		155	141	Includes 17 square miles of reserved forests.
Lakhimpur "	...	...		64	54	
Laluk & Bangfang "	...	...		154	137	
Naobaicha "	...	...		107	92	Includes 13 square miles of reserved forests.
Narayanpur "	...	...		109	94	
Nakari and Kamalabari mauzas	...	...		49	30	
Telahi mauza	...	...		94	82	

TABLE
Excise

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-01.
DIBRUGARH SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	95	92	94	97
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 87,506	88,019	87,215	88,988
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Opium issued ...	294 23 0	270 15 0	269 36 0	282 32 0
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 3,35,959	3,08,058	3,07,686	3,22,394
Number of ganja shops ...	18	18	18	18
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 31,847	35,456	33,313	33,002
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	56 36 12	54 16 8	32 12 0	50 27 8
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 20,442	19,554	11,628	19,356
Number of country spirit shops ...	20	21	21	20
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 1,58,440	1,94,752	2,03,569	1,90,288
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...
Still head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	Rs. 4,817	5,028	3,770	3,467
NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION—				
Number of opium shops ...	46	46	46	46
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 18,075	19,002	17,646	19,619
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Opium issued ...	81 35 0	84 2 1	86 37 0	90 30 0
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 93,337	95,990	99,096	1,03,454
Number of ganja shops ...	2	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 862	844	734	840
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	1 17 0	0 31 0	1 0 0	1 21 0
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 513	267	342	513
Number of country spirit shops ...	5	5	5	5
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 7,466	7,020	7,224	8,667
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...
Still head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	Rs. 27	30	144	147
TOTAL DISTRICT—				
Number of opium shops ...	141	128	140	143
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 1,05,581	1,07,021	1,04,861	1,03,557
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Opium issued ...	376 23 0	354 17 1	356 33 0	373 22 0
Duty on opium sold ...	Rs. 4,29,296	4,04,048	4,06,782	4,25,848
Number of ganja shops ...	20	20	20	20
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 32,709	36,300	34,047	33,842
	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.	md. srs. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	58 13 12	55 7 8	33 12 0	52 8 8
Duty on ganja sold ...	Rs. 20,955	19,821	11,970	19,869
Number of country spirit shops ...	25	26	26	25
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. 1,65,906	2,01,772	2,10,793	1,98,955
Number of distilleries ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of liquor issued ...	...	...	...	...
Still head duty ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Number of retail shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses ...	Rs. ...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue ...	Rs. 4,844	5,058	3,914	3,614

XVI. Statistics.

[illegible]

TABLE XVII.

Income and expenditure of Local Boards
Dibrugarh Local Board.

	Income.				Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.			1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.			Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	16,149	33,948	Post Office ...	...	1,064	2,607
Police ...	3,832	4,489	Administration ...	...	113	113
Tolls on Ferries ...	1,192	3,810	Education ...	...	4,136	12,053
Contributions ...	26,946	28,000	Medical ...	...	1,699	7,459
Debt ...	..	393	Civil Works ...	...	26,408	65,830
Miscellaneous ..	583	1,795	Debt ...	...	...	505
			Miscellaneous ...	...	2,488	1,641
Total ...	48,702	73,435	Total ...	...	35,908	90,208

North Lakhimpur Local Board.

	Income.				Expenditure.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.			1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.			Rs.	Rs.
Provincial rates ...	5,565	10,296	Post Office ...	..	1,170	2,075
Police ...	556	1,108	Administration ...	...	74	74
Tolls on Ferries ...	1,251	1,884	Education ...	...	3,432	4,368
Contributions ...	22,419	25,920	Medical ...	...	377	1,426
Debt ...	...	1,425	Civil Works ...	...	15,167	35,512
			Debt ...	...	...	1,009
			Miscellaneous ...	...	1,862	715
Total ...	29,791	40,633	Total ...	...	22,072	45,181

TABLE XVIII.
Income and expenditure of municipality.
Dibrugarh Municipality.

SOURCES OF INCOME.	INCOME.		HEADS OF EXPENDITURE.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ..	2,128	128	Administration ...	1,559	2,448
Tax on houses and lands ...	3,986	6,099	Conservancy ...	3,136	11,986
Pounds ...	2,278	1,064	Public works ...	7,888	10,245
Fees from markets ...	2,145	3,791	Public instruction ...	761	921
Grants from Government			Drainage ...	1,079	2,074
and Local Funds ...	5,000	8,000	Other heads ...	8,812	6,180
Rent of houses, &c. ...	4,676	6,299	Closing balance ...	1,184	726
Conservancy ...	491	5,166			
Other sources ..	3,765	4,043			
Total ..	24,419	34,590	Total ...	24,419	34,590

TABLE XIX.
Strength of Police Force.

PARTICULARS.	1881.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.			
SUPERVISING STAFF.			
District and Assistant Superintendents ...	2	1	1
Inspectors ...	2	2	2
SUBORDINATE STAFF.			
Sub-Inspectors ...	5	5	8
Head Constables ...	12	18	10
Constables ...	99	107	154
Union and Municipal Police ...	7	...	...
MILITARY POLICE.			
Officers ...	...	79	91
Men ...	...	645	756
Total Expenditure Rs. ...	86,253	1,60,462	2,68,052

Note—Actual strength for 1881 and for military police in 1891 and sanctioned strength for other years. As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained in 1901, the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XX.

Police Stations and Outposts.

Name of Police Station or Outpost.		SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
		Sub-Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	TOTAL.
DIBRUGARH.	Dhemaji out post	...	1	4	5
	Dibrugarh Police station	3	1	16	20
	Dumduma " "	2	...	10	12
	Jaipur out post	1	...	5	6
	Margherita " "	1	...	5	6
	Moran " "	1	...	5	6
	Sadiya " "	...	1	3	4
	Tinsukia Police station	2	...	10	12
NORTH LAKHIMPUR.	Dhakuakhana out post	1	...	7	8
	North Lakhimpur Police station	2	...	10	12

TABLE XXI.

Military Police Outposts.

Name.		Distances from Head-Quarters.	STRENGTH.			
			Cold weather.		Rains.	
			Officers.	Men.	Officers.	Men.
Sadiya	...	65 miles	12	54	12	54
Dikrang	...	70 "	2	12	...	...
Dibang	...	70 "	2	12	...	...
Sesseri	...	81 "	2	16	...	...
Kerimpani	...	79 "	3	22	...	...
Bomjur	...	90 "	4	26	...	...
Difu	...	71 "	2	16	...	...
Sunpura	...	88 "	2	16	...	...
Dijmur	...	20 "	2	16	...	...
Sisi	...	22 "	2	12	...	...
North Lakhimpur	...	118 "	7	27	7	27
Jaipur	...	86 "	2	9	2	9
Lungchang	...	70 "	3	18	...	...
Lallimukh	...	...	2	18	...	...
Laimakury	...	...	2	18	...	...

TABLE XXII.
JAIL STATISTICS.
Dibrugarh Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population ...	{ Male ... Female ...	45	58	100
Rate of Jail mortality per 1,000 ...	...	102	66	.....
Expenditure on Jail maintenance Rs. ...	...	6,048	5,372	12,920
Cost of fooding and clothing per prisoner Rs. ...	...	45	52	85
Profits on Jail manufacture Rs. ...	...	2,299	4,066	1,093
Earnings per prisoner (a) Rs. ...	...	54	74	12

North Lakhimpur Subsidiary Jail.

		1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population ..	{ Male ... Female ...	9	11	14
Rate of Jail mortality per 1,000 ...	...	.....	.....	.....
Expenditure on Jail maintenance Rs. ...	...	1,101	1,431	889
Cost of fooding and clothing per prisoner Rs. ...	...	28	55	37
Profits on jail manufacture Rs. ...	...	276	432	814
Earnings per prisoner(a) Rs. ...	...	34	43	29

(a) Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE
Edu-

	1900-01	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>High Schools—</i>				
Number ...	1	1	1	1
" of boys reading in High School Classes ...	65	64	69	72
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	111	137	122	123
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	252	281	216	180
<i>Middle English Schools—</i>				
Number ...	7	8	7	4
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	62	80	81	56
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	460	544	560	330
<i>Middle Vernacular Schools—</i>				
Number ...	3	3	3	3
" of boys reading in Middle School Classes ...	57	61	69	39
" of boys reading in Primary Classes ...	168	162	158	140
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools—</i>				
Number ...	3	3	3	1
" of boys reading in Upper Primary Classes ...	18	22	27	4
" of boys reading in Lower Primary Classes ...	113	108	82	53
<i>Lower Primary Schools—</i>				
Number ...	189	161	172	160
" of boys reading in three Upper Classes ...	(a) 3,870	(a) 3,434	1,480	1,277
" of boys reading in Lower Classes ...			2,509	2,687
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools ...	12	9	11	6
" of Girls reading (whether in Girls' or Boys' Schools) in :—				
High Schools ...	...	...	...	...
Middle English Schools ...	...	6	...	...
Middle Vernacular Schools ...	68	83	76	87
Upper Primary Schools ...	...	...	...	27
Lower Primary Schools ...	184	140	189	94

(a) Separate figures

XXIII.

cation.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

not available

TABLE XXIV.

Educational Finance in 1900-01.

PARTICULARS.	No of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 19'0-01 FROM.					EXPENDITURE PER SCHOLAR.		
		Provincial Revenues.	Local and Municipal Fund.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.			
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	As.	P.
Training and Special Schools ...	4	8,261	825	2,255	1,708	13,049	173	15	9
Secondary Boys' Schools :—									
Upper (High) ...	1	— 772	...	7,787	35	7,050	16	11	4
Lower (Middle) ...	10	1,315	2,630	4,288	1,879	10,112	14	6	10
Primary Boys' Schools :—									
Upper ...	3	234	320	72	164	790	6	12	11
Lower ...	189	...	11,466	420	72	11,958	3	6	4
Girls' School ...	12	...	1,066	33	115	1,214	6	0	1
Total ...	219	9,038	16,307	14,855	3,973	44,173	8	12	1

TABLE XXV.

Medical.

PARTICULARS.	DIRBUGARH SUBDIVISION.				NORTH LAKHIMPUR SUBDIVISION.				TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	1891.		1901.		1891.		1901.		1891.	1901.	1901.
	1891.	1901.	1891.	1901.	1891.	1901.	1891.	1901.	1891.	1901.	1901.
Number of dispensaries	2	1	4		1	1	2		3	2	6
Daily average number of indoor patients	16.02	26.66	56.30		86	1.66	2.04		16.33	25.32	58.34
" " outdoor "	28.69	25.88	156.10		13.37	18.62	59.82		37.06	39.50	215.92
Cases treated	2,389	7,240	26,183		601	3,694	15,628		2,990	10,834	52,111(a)
Operations performed	79	232	677		27	52	188		106	264	865
Total income	3,492	8,785	21,697		642	1,327	2,372		4,131	10,112	24,569
Income from Government	844	1,642	7,889		102	148	515		946	1,790	8,404
Income from local and municipal funds	1,213	1,800	8,650		...	300	1,209		1,213	2,100	9,859
Subscriptions	1,267	987	1,838		417	154	184		1,684	1,091	2,022
Total expenditure	3,290	8,720	21,664		549	1,310	2,370		3,839	10,080	24,584
Expenditure on establishment	1,694	2,135	3,862		194	312	324		1,888	2,447	4,686
Ratio per mile of persons successfully vaccinated	...	not available	...		not available	...	...		9.23	51.40	40.04
Cost per case	...	not available	...		not available	...	...		...	0 1 11	0 1 11

(a) Excludes 85 persons treated in the private dispensary at Phukanbari.

TABLE
Dispen

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Dibrugarh	22,318	25,985	17,274	25,160	10,772	26,396	12,176	22,839	9,766	26,730		
Tengakhat	2,353	4,866	2,025	5,476	1,103	6,662	978	7,820	1,217	7,818		
Tinsukia	...	...	1,841	3,325	1,222	5,901	994	5,765	1,315	7,049		
Sadiya	...	...	526	2,522	606	2,665	580	1,324	640	3,952		
Dibrumukh	...	...	...	...	2,520	4,296	1,153	6,871	1,217	6,788		
North Lakhimpur ...	1,522	8,750	1,375	8,889	962	8,939	1,104	9,591	1,274	9,510		
Dhakuakhana	1,296	3,676	1,496	6,739	954	7,669	1,011	8,005	974	10,810		

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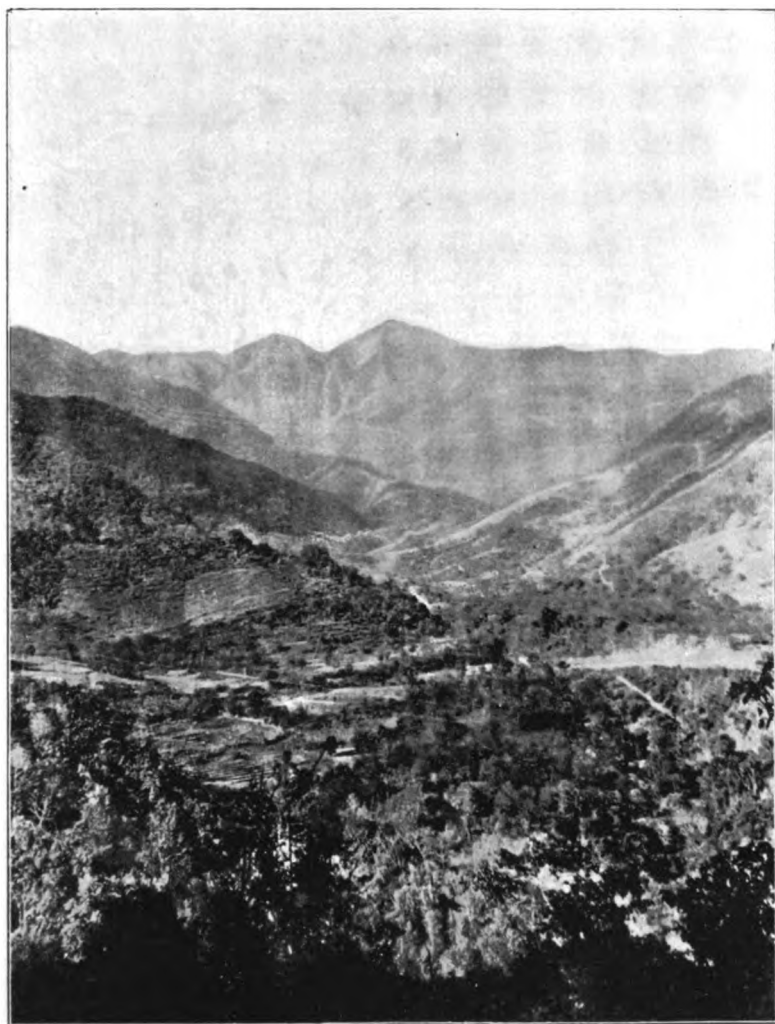
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MOUNT JAPVO.

ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

Volume IX.

NAGA HILLS AND MANIPUR

BY

B. C. ALLEN, C.S.



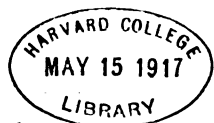
CALCUTTA :

PRINTED AT THE BAPTIST MISSION PRESS,

1905.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



F. H. Hall fund

PREFACE.

The Gazetteer of the Naga Hills district should only be regarded as a supplement to the monographs on the various Naga tribes, which are now under preparation by Mr. A. W. Davis, C.S. Similarly, much interesting information, which might under other circumstances have suitably been incorporated in this work, will be published separately in various monographs on the Manipuris and the hill tribes subject to them, which are now engaging the attention of Mr. Hodson. It will be observed that there is no directory appended to this Gazetteer. Apart from the headquarters stations there are, however, no towns or places of sufficient size or importance to demand a separate description. I am indebted to Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, C.S.I., for his kindness in examining the Gazetteer of Manipur, and to Mr. Davis and Mr. Reid for criticising the Gazetteer of the Naga Hills.

SHILLONG :

B. C. ALLEN.

29th May, 1905.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

Area and Boundaries—Mountain system—River system—Geology—
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THE district of the Naga Hills lies between 25°2' and 26°47' N. and 98°17' and 94°52' E. and covers an area of 8,647 square miles. On the north it is bounded by Sibsagar; on the west by Sibsagar, Nowgong, and the North Cachar Hills; on the south by the native state of Manipur; and on the east by mountain ranges inhabited by independent Naga tribes.

The district consists of a narrow strip of hilly country, and has a maximum length as the crow flies of 188 miles, and an average breadth of about 25 miles. The Barail enters it at the south-west corner and runs in a north-easterly direction almost up to Kohima. As far as Berrima there are three main ranges of hills lying parallel to one another, the most northerly of the three being the largest and the most important, and containing several peaks over 6,000 feet in height. To one approaching the district from the

north, this range stands up like a great wall. For, though there are from ten to twelve miles of hilly- country between its lower slopes and the flat valley of the Dhansiri, these outer hills are, for the most part, only from 1,500 to 2,000 feet in height. Near Kohima the Barail is merged in the mountain ranges which have been prolonged through Manipur from the Yoma of Arakan, and the main range assumes a much more northerly direction. This range is considerably higher than the Barail. Overhanging Mao Thana, on the southern frontier of the district, there is a mountain whose summit is 9,808 feet above the level of the sea, and a few miles further north stands Japvo (9,890 feet), the highest point in the British Province of Assam.* These are, however, only the highest points in a chain most of whose peaks between Mao Thana and Kohima are considerably more than 7,000 feet above sea level.

North of Kohima, the main range gradually declines in height. Merama peak is only 4,900 feet above the sea, and Nidzukru and Thevokeji a little above 5,700 feet, but Thebzothu or Wokha Hill is 6,600 feet in height. A little to the north of Wokha the range is pierced by the valley of the Doiang, which here makes a sudden bend and runs south-west to Lungkung. From Lungkung a chain of hills runs north-east till it is stopped by the Jhanzi, almost on the northern border of the district. This range is an unusually straight and level one, most of the hills being between 2,000 or 3,000 feet in

* The Daphabum on the eastern frontier of Lakhimpur is 15,000 feet above mean sea level, but it lies outside the Inner Line.

height, but at Munching it rises to 4,234 feet. An outer range runs parallel to it on the west, which has a general height of between 1,500 or 2,500 feet, and a third range lies between the two northern sections of these chains of hills. The Japvo range throws out numerous spurs towards the east and west, and the same phenomenon is to be observed in the hills which traverse the Mokokchung subdivision north of the Doiang. The general north-eastern tendency is still discernible, but the country, as a whole, consists of a tumbled mass of hills, most of which are between three and four thousand feet in height.

In their natural state these hills are covered with dense evergreen forest. Most of the easier slopes, up to a height of about 5,000 feet, have, however, at one time or another, been cleared for cultivation. Where this has been done they are covered for the most part with scrub, bamboo, and grass, and the larger forest trees have disappeared. In the country inhabited by the Angamis the hill sides have been cut out into terraced rice fields and there is comparatively little jungle to be seen. Nowhere, in fact, is there much timber still remaining except in the bottom of the river valleys and on the summits of the hills. The slopes of Japvo are covered with primeval forest, huge trees tower into the air, and there is comparatively little undergrowth beneath their over-shadowing limbs. Near the summit, the forest is almost entirely composed of rhododendrons, whose trunks and boughs are buried in thick moss and lichen. The actual peak is a mass of tumbled rocks, which, towards the south, fall away in a sheer precipice

General
appearance
of district.

over a thousand feet in depth. Some of the higher hills near Japvo have steep grassy slopes, studded with rocks and boulders, and are almost entirely destitute of tree growth; a characteristic which is still more strongly marked in the portion of the range that lies beyond the frontier of Manipur. In the neighbourhood of Kohima the valleys are broad, the slopes of the hills are fairly easy, and have, to a great extent, been brought under cultivation, and the scenery is, for a hill district, unusually tame. The lower hills are not so healthy and are in consequence but sparsely peopled. The outer ranges on the north are for the most part covered with heavy jungle, and the intervening valleys afford a home for elephants and other varieties of big game.

**River
System.**

The Barail and the Japvo range of mountains form the watershed of the district, and, as they are seldom more than ten or fifteen miles from the western boundary, none of the rivers that come tumbling down their slopes have time to attain to any considerable dimensions before they enter Sibsagar or Nowgong. Almost as far north as Mokokchung, the whole of the drainage of the north-western face of the hills ultimately finds its way into the Dhansiri. The Dhansiri itself rises in the south-west corner of the Naga Hills, below the Laishiang peak, and flows a north-westerly course for about fifteen miles. It then turns at right angles to the north-east, and as far as Dimapur forms the northern boundary of the district. As it flows along a few miles from the outer range of hills it receives a large number of tributaries. But, with the exception of the Diphupani, they are all of them small and unimportant,

and even the Diphupani is barely thirty miles in length.

The next river worthy of mention is the Rengmapani which falls into the Doiang; but the Zubza, as the Rengmapani is called when flowing through the hills, is, after all, a very inconsiderable stream. The only river of any importance in the district is the Doiang. It rises near Mao-Thana and flows a north-north-easterly course for five and forty miles, when it suddenly turns to the north-west, and pierces the main chain of hills. After flowing for twelve miles in this direction it again turns at right angles and flows for twenty miles to the south-west. Here it turns sharp again to the north-west, and, shortly after emerging from the hills, it is joined by its largest tributary, the Rengmapani. The Doiang receives all the drainage of the main range between the Rengmapani and Wokha, while its tributary the Bagti, a stream about twenty-five miles in length, drains the valley between the inner and outer range of hills between Bhandari and Sonigao. The Doiang is only navigable for a few miles within the hills, as the channel is blocked with rocks at Nabha. If these were blasted, canoes could probably go as far as the Mokokchung Wokha road.

North of the Doiang, the principal streams are the Disai and the Jhanzi, which ultimately fall into the Brahmaputra, after flowing through the Sibsagar district. The northern frontier of the Naga Hills is marked by the Dikho, which is navigable for a short distance within the hills, though the head hunting proclivities of the tribes living on the further bank might render the voyage rather a risky undertaking. The principal river in

the territory which has recently been annexed is the Tizu, with its tributary the Lanier, which falls into the Chindwin. With the exception of the Doiang all of these rivers are mere mountain streams, which make their way towards the plains by fairly easy gradients. There are no waterfalls of any importance on any of these rivers, and there are no lakes or *jhils* within the boundaries of the district.

Geology. Generally speaking the Naga Hills are said to be composed of pretertiary rocks overlaid by tertiary strata. Oldham in 1883 described the hills, for about 20 miles north of Mao and east of Kohima, as axial, while to the west of Kohima lay a tract of tertiary country, with dun or gravel deposits immediately to the south and east of Nichuguard.* The hillsides are formed of a treacherous grey shale, which is very liable to slip after heavy rain, and which forms a stiff hard clay when cut out into the terraces on which rice is grown. There are deposits of limestone rock imbedded in the shale, ranging in colour from a light gray to a deep blue, which make an excellent building stone. A certain quantity of tufa lime has recently been discovered in the valley of the Sijju east of Kohima, and there are strings and nests of lignite in the hills near Nichuguard. Coal is also found in the hills through which the Disai debouches on the plains, and near the village of Anakey in the Mokokchung subdivision. But the most important coal fields in the Naga Hills lie outside the borders of the district, and have in consequence

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Pt. 4.

been described in the Gazetteers of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur.

During the winter time the climate of the higher hills is cold and bracing. The days are generally bright and sunny, but frost at night is by no means uncommon. At the hottest season of the year the thermometer seldom rises above 80° Fahrenheit in a well-built bungalow at Kohima, but, as the air is surcharged with moisture, the climate is sometimes found a little enervating. The low ranges of hills that adjoin the plains are far from healthy, and Nagas who settle there suffer much from fever, and generally deteriorate in physique. The average rainfall at Kohima is only 76½ inches in the year. It is considerably lower than that recorded further east, Wokha returning over, and Mokokchung nearly, one hundred inches. Kohima is, however, sheltered to some extent by the high range of Japvo.

Climate and
Rainfall.

Nearly four-fifths of the total rainfall at Kohima is precipitated during the four months June to September, and the fall in April and May is unusually low for Assam. The monthly rainfall at Kohima, Wokha, and Mokokchung will be found in Table I. Strong winds blow from the north-west in February and March, but destructive gales or tornadoes are not common.

There is very little game in the Angami country, but wild animals are still to be found in the hot unhealthy valleys, lying between the outer ranges of hills. The list includes elephants, bison (*bos gaurus*), buffalo, tigers, leopards, bears, the sambur (*cervus unicolor*, and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). The serow is occasionally found on the higher mountains, and

Fauna.

the flying lemur (*galeopithecus volans*) is sometimes met with in the woods. Game birds include wild fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*), partridges, pheasants, including the horned variety (*tragopan blythii*), and woodcock. The wood duck (*asarcorius sentutatus*) is also occasionally seen. Elephants are fairly common in the western part of the district, and in 1908-04, 18 animals were captured by a gentleman who had been allowed to hunt this tract. A small herd also makes its home in an elevated valley near the village of Khonoma. The scarcity of game is illustrated by the fact that in 1908 only one person was killed by a wild animal in the Naga Hills, and rewards were only paid for the destruction of 4 tigers, 14 leopards, and 1 bear.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Summary—Captain Jenkin's March—Expeditions by Mr. Grange, Lieutenant Bigge and Captain Eld—Sixth and Seventh Expeditions—Lieutenant Vincent's Expedition—Tenth Expedition—Abandonment of the Policy of non-interference—Colonel Hopkinson's Policy—Lieutenant Gregory at Samaguting—Captain Butler's administration in 1876—Occupation of Kohima in 1878—Mr. Damant's murder in 1879—Siege of Kohima—Punitive measures in 1880—Pacification of district—Burning of Ratami—Punishment of Mozungzami—Burning of Yampong—Incorporation of the area of Political control.

BROADLY speaking, the history of our relations with **summary.** the Nagas may be divided into the following four periods—the period of control from without, by a system of expeditions or promenades; the period of control from within; the period of absolute non-interference; and the second period of control from within, merging into gradual absorption into British territory. It should first be premised that for the annexation of their territory the Nagas are themselves responsible. The cost of the administration of the district is out of all proportion to the revenue that is obtained, and we only occupied the hills after a bitter experience extending over many years, which clearly showed that annexation

was the only way of preventing raids upon our villages. Had the Angami Nagas consented to respect our frontiers, they might have remained as independent as the tribes inhabiting the hills to the south of Sibsagar and Lakhimpur; but it was impossible for any civilized power to acquiesce in the perpetual harrying of its border folk.

The first period of the history of our relations with the Nagas dates from 1889 to 1846. During this time Government attempted to control the tribes by sending expeditions into the hills; but the desired result was not obtained, and raids continued to be made into British territory. From 1847 to 1850, the experiment was tried of establishing outposts in the Naga Hills. Samaguting was the first place selected, and later on Lieutenant Vincent held a stockade at Mozema, and, for a short time, at Khonoma itself. In 1851, Government withdrew from the hills, and for the next ten years the policy of non-interference was given a fair trial, with results that were very much the reverse of satisfactory. In 1866, the post at Samaguting was re-established, and in 1878, the Deputy Commissioner took up his quarters in the heart of the Angami Naga country at Kohima. Mr. Damant was the last Deputy Commissioner to come to a violent end, and, since his death in 1879, the history of the district has been the history of the gradual extension and consolidation of our rule.

Captain
Jenkins
marches
through the
Naga Hills.

The history of what is now the district of the Naga Hills down to the year 1882 is told in the North-East Frontier of Bengal, by Mr. (afterwards Sir Alexander) Mackenzie, and need only be briefly summarised

below. The Angami country was first entered by a European in 1882, when Captain Jenkins and Captain Pemberton marched from Manipur, *via* Popolongmai and Samaguting, to Mohandiju on the Jamuna river. They were accompanied by an escort of 700 Manipuri sepoys, and during the whole of their march met with continuous and stubborn opposition. In the following year Gambhir Singh, Raja of Manipur, accompanied by Lieutenant Gordon, marched through the hills by a route a little to the east of the one followed by his two predecessors. The Nagas were at this time in the habit of raiding upon our villages in North Cachar, and the Raja of Manipur and Tula Ram Senapati,* were called upon to keep them under proper control, a request with which neither of them were in any way able to comply. This requisition was accordingly withdrawn in 1887, and it was decided to bring some pressure to bear upon the Naga tribes, through the intervention of a British officer.

In January 1889, Mr. Grange, Sub-Assistant to the Commissioner at Nowgong, was deputed to lead the first expedition into the Angami country. His transport arrangements were, however, so inadequate, that he found himself powerless to take any definite action, and his expedition degenerated into a somewhat hurried march through a part only of the Naga Hills. Twelve months later Mr. Grange led a second expedition into the hills. He marched *via* Samaguting and Khonoma to Tokquama village, two marches further on towards

First two expeditions led by Mr. Grange in 1889 and 1890.

* Tula Ram Senapati was an adventurer who succeeded in making himself master of a small portion of the North Cachar Hills and the upper valley of the Kapili. His history will be found in the Gazetteer of the Cachar district.

Manipur. He met with a good deal of opposition, which he succeeded in overcoming by vigorous and at the same time cautious action, and in the course of his operations burnt down five villages which opposed him and took eleven prisoners.* The effects of these strong measures seems to have been satisfactory, and there were no Naga raids in 1840.

Third and
Fourth ex-
peditions
under Lieu-
tenant
Bigge.

Between November 1840, and January 1842, Lieutenant Bigge, the successor of Mr. Grange, conducted two expeditions into Naga land, in the course of which he met with fairly friendly treatment from the hill men. During the second of these excursions a boundary line was laid down between Manipur and the Angami Naga territory.

Fifth expe-
dition un-
der Cap-
tain Eld in
1844.

In 1843 no British officer entered the hills, but the Nagas were more enterprising and raided the plains and killed four persons. In the following year they marched into the Rengma Hills and killed nine people, and murdered three of our Shan sepoy in the North Cachar Hills. To avenge this outrage, Captain Eld entered the hills in December 1844, and burnt several of the guilty villages, including a part of the powerful village of Khonoma.

Sixth and
Seventh
expeditions.
Bhogchand
posted at
Samaguting.

In the following year Captain Butler, who had succeeded Captain Eld as Principal Assistant Commissioner at Nowgong, made a peaceful tour through the hills; but, though he met with a friendly reception, the

* An account of this and subsequent expeditions down to 1851 will be found in Butler's *Travels and Adventures in Assam*.—London: Smith Elder & Co., 1855.

Nagas did not discontinue their depredations on the plains. In 1846-47, another expedition was sent into the hills, and it was decided to see whether the establishment of an outpost amongst the Naga villages might not deter these pertinacious savages from raiding on the plains. Samaguting was the place selected, and the post was entrusted to Bhogchand Daroga, a resolute and determined man, who had attracted the attention of the Administration by the courageous way in which he had extricated his small escort of the sepoys, when attacked by a greatly superior force of the Nagas. Unfortunately, Bhogchand had the faults which are often found in resolute and courageous men, and endeavoured to press on too far and fast. In 1849, he visited Mozema, to enquire into a dispute which was in progress between Nilholi and Jubili, two leading men in that village. Bhogchand, though only attended by a small and far from reliable escort, had, as Sir Alexander Mackenzie says, a firm belief in the prestige of a British constable, and conducted the whole of his proceedings exactly as he would have done in the case of a riot in the plains. One of Jubili's followers had been murdered by Nilholi's men, and Bhogchand proceeded to arrest the culprits. He then, in a spirit of severe impartiality, seized seven Kacharis who belonged to Jubili's party, and proceeded to remove his prisoners to Samaguting. Conduct of this kind was not calculated to please either side, and, though for a time it had the effect of putting an end to the feud with which the village had been torn, the result was hardly what had been intended or anticipated by Bhogchand. The two disputing chiefs combined to attack

their mutual enemy at Préphemah.* His guard was guilty of disgraceful cowardice, and Bhogchand and thirteen of the sepoys and coolies were killed.

Expedition
led by Lieu-
tenant Vin-
cent, 1849.

It was impossible to overlook or condone the murder of our local representative, and in December 1849, an expedition was despatched under Lieutenant Vincent to avenge the Daroga's death. The troops occupied Mozema, and Nilholi and his clan retired further back into the hills. But, while Lieutenant Campbell, who was in charge of the detachment, was visiting the neighbouring village of Jotsoma, the enemy burnt down Mozema and destroyed his stores. The expedition had accordingly to return, but in March 1850, Lieutenant Vincent re-entered the hills and took up his quarters at Mozema, where he remained during the rains. He burnt the village of Jakhama, and established an outpost of forty-six men at Khonoma; but, as two sepoys were killed close by the stockade, he decided in August to concentrate his whole force at Mozema, after burning down a portion of the Khonoma village. So little reliance could be placed upon the Nagas near Khonoma that he found it necessary to prohibit the sepoys from leaving the stockade even to draw water, except in parties of twenty men under a non-commissioned officer with at least ten muskets.

Tenth expe-
dition in
1850.

Lieutenant Vincent's position at Mozema was far from satisfactory, and in December 1850, the tenth expedition was sent into the hills. A detachment of

* Butler (p. 178) makes no mention of Jubili having joined in the attack. His clan is said to have opposed Nilholi on his return to Mozema, and they protected three men who had been left behind in Mozema by the Daroga.

384 men of all arms, equipped with two three-pounder guns and two four-inch mortars, was despatched against the fort at Khonoma. So strong, however, were the defences that, though the guns were finally brought within 75 yards, they did no appreciable damage, and an attempt to escalate the fort was foiled by a deep trench. The force accordingly bivouacked before the village for the night, and in the morning found that the place had been abandoned. The troops then made a demonstration through the hills, and several villages which opposed their progress or declined to furnish them with supplies were burnt. One village, Kekrima, sent in two heralds to our camp and solemnly challenged us to a trial of strength. The Manipuris, so they said, were afraid to meet them, and they doubted whether the British were of a different temper. It would have been fatal to our slowly-developing prestige to decline this challenge, and a move was accordingly made against the village. Kekrima was said to contain 1,000 houses and was proportionately dreaded, but the British force consisted of 150 sepoy with two three-pounders and a mortar, and about 800 friendly Nagas armed with spears. The downfall of the challengers was complete. They left at least 100 warriors dead upon the field, while our loss in killed was only two Nagas and one camp-follower.

The troops were then withdrawn from the hills, and it was determined for the future to abstain from all interference with the Nagas. The policy that it was decided to pursue was laid down in a minute by the Governor-General, the purport of which is summarised

Policy of
non-inter-
vention.

in the following paragraph: "Hereafter," wrote Lord Dalhousie, "we should confine ourselves to our own ground; protect it as it can and must be protected; not meddle in the feuds or fights of these savages; encourage trade with them as long they are peaceful towards us; and rigidly exclude them from all communication either to sell what they have got, or to buy what they want if they should become turbulent or troublesome."

It was, however, one thing to say that we would have no dealings with the Nagas, another to prevent the Nagas from having any dealings with our people. The protection of that long line of jungle-covered frontier proved to be impossible. In 1851, after the policy of non-intervention had been definitely adopted, no less than 22 Naga raids occurred, in which 55 persons were killed, 10 wounded, and 113 taken captive. It is true that only three of these raids were positively traced to Angamis, but most of them were committed in North Cachar, and there were serious grounds for suspecting this particular section of the Naga tribes.

The policy of non-interference was given a fair trial, but it was impossible to resist the conclusion that it was unsuccessful. The local officers were repeatedly urging upon Government the necessity of taking a more vigorous line, and, in 1862, the Commissioner of Assam brought the matter prominently before the Lieutenant-Governor. It was not creditable, he said, to our Government that such atrocities should recur annually with unvarying certainty, and that we should be powerless alike to protect our subjects or to punish the aggressors. It was quite certain that our relations with the Nagas could not

be on a worse footing. The non-interference policy was excellent in theory, but Government would probably be inclined to think that it must be abandoned.

Sir Cecil Beadon concurred generally in these views, and directed that an officer stationed at Nowgong should be placed in immediate communication with the Nagas, that the chiefs on the border should be informed that Government held them responsible for the good conduct of their villages, and that annual stipends would be paid to them for this police duty, as long as they performed it well. In practice, however, little effect seems to have been given to these orders, and further raids in March and April 1866 again brought the Naga question into notice. The Lieutenant-Governor declined to fall back before these wild tribes, and to recede from their neighbourhood, whenever they happened to annoy us. This proposal had been made by officers in charge of the North Cachar Hills, in despair of ever being able to protect their frontier without the more vigorous action, from which, under the orders of Government, they were debarred. Sir Cecil Beadon pointed out that, were this policy generally adopted, Assam would soon be divided amongst the Bhutias, Abors, Nagas, Garos, Mishmis and other wild tribes with which it was surrounded, and which would quickly take advantage of any signs of weakness in the central Government.

Decision to
abandon the
policy of
non-inter-
ference, in
1866.

Colonel Hopkinson, the Commissioner, proceeded to review the existing position with regard to North Cachar and the Nagas, and his opinions are thus summarised by Sir Alexander Mackenzie:—

Col. Hopkin-
son's policy

"He was not himself averse from taking a more direct control of the country. He, however, pointed out that the democratic nature of the tribal arrangements among the Angamis, the infinite divisions and disputes existing even in a single village, rendered it impossible to hope for success from the policy of conciliation *ab extra* proposed by the Government. He admitted that no system of frontier military defence that could be devised would secure perfect immunity from raids. A country void of roads, void of supplies,—a country of interminable hills, of vast swamps covered with dense forest, save where here and there a speck in the ocean of wilderness reveals a miserable Mikir or Kachari clearance, could not possibly be defended at every point against a foe for whom hill and swamp and forest are resources rather than obstacles. From 1854 to 1865, there had been nineteen Angami raids, in which 232 British subjects had been killed, wounded, or carried off. Ninety-two of these unfortunates had been so lost during the three years (1854-56), when a chain of outposts was in existence from Barpathar to Assaloo, connected by roads which were regularly patrolled. 'At most we should be able to keep the raids of such savages below a certain maximum, and prevent their extension to settled districts.' The settlement of a trade blockade, the Commissioner maintained, was advantageous when it could be made practically complete, and so far as it was complete; but none of these schemes would secure the peace of the frontier. They had all been tried and found wanting. If Government were prepared to consider a more advanced policy he was ready to show how it could best be carried out. He would depute a specially-qualified officer to proceed with a force of not less than 200 men, and effect a permanent lodgment in the country at a point most convenient for keeping open communications and procuring supplies. This officer would then invite the chiefs to submit themselves to us. Those who agreed would, as a token of submission, pay an annual tribute, and in return receive our aid and protection; while those who refused would be told that we would leave them to themselves so long as they kept the peace towards us and those who submitted themselves to us."

Lieut. Gregory estab-
lished at
Samaguting in 1866.

The Government of India then sanctioned the establishment of a strong post under Lieutenant Gregory at Samaguting. He was allowed a force of 150 police, all hill-men and well-armed, and was informed that his principal duty was the protection of the plains from the

incursions of the Nagas. A good deal was of necessity left to his discretion, but he was ordered not to exert himself to extend our rule into the interior. In January 1866, the Nagas of Razepeema cut up a Mikir village in North Cachar. In March, Lieutenant Gregory visited Razepeema and burnt it, but three months later the hill-men retaliated by killing twenty-six Mikirs in the village of Sergamcha. In the following cold weather Lieutenant Gregory visited Razepeema, burnt the village, prohibited the people from re-occupying their old lands and fields, and distributed them amongst other communities.

The establishment of an officer in the Naga Hills had, for a time, the effect of stopping raids upon British territory, but trouble was now experienced from the side of Manipur. The area of hill country over which this State had any right to exercise jurisdiction was vague and ill-defined, and this resulted in friction with the larger and more powerful villages. The boundary line between Manipur and the Naga Hills district was accordingly laid down in 1872. The earlier line of 1842 was maintained in all essential points wherever it could be identified.* A few villages on the dividing line of the waterpent, over which Manipur had acquired supremacy, were

Boundary
between
Manipur
and the
Naga Hills
laid down
in 1872.

* This line was defined as follows:—"Commencing from the upper part of the Jiri river, the western frontier of Manipur, the line of boundary formed (1) by the Dootighur mountain, or that range of hills in which the Mookroo river takes its rise, east on to the Barak river; (2) by the Barak river up to where it is joined by the Tayphani river, which flows along the eastern side of the Popolongmai hill; (3) by the Tayphani river up to its source on the Barail range of mountains; and (4) by the summit or waterpent of the Barail range on to the source of the Mow river flowing north from that point towards Assam.—*North-East Frontier*, p. 107.

demarcated as belonging to that State; and from the termination of the line of 1842, at a point called the Telizo Peak, eastward, the watershed of the main line of hills, which divide the affluents of the Brahmaputra from those of the Irawadi, as far as the Patkai pass, was declared to be the limit of Manipur on its northern frontier. The Naga Hills district was advanced to march with the boundary of Manipur as thus determined.*

Capt. Butler's administration and death in 1876.

Captain Gregory was succeeded by Captain Butler in 1869, and the latter officer, who was by character and disposition admirably qualified for the appointment which he held, proceeded to gradually extend our control over the hill tribes. Survey parties under a proper escort were sent into the hills, and, when at Wokha in January 1875, a cooly was murdered and the camp attacked, the retribution taken was sharp and sudden. Butler's operations were, however, brought to a close before the end of the season, as he was ordered to proceed to avenge Lieutenant Holcombe and eighty of his men, who were treacherously attacked and killed in February by trans-Dikho Nagas.

Previous to this, the first steps for the formal annexation of the Naga Hills had been taken by Captain Johnstone, who, in 1874, was officiating for Captain Butler. He definitely took three villages under his protection, and in token of their submission they agreed to pay revenue to Government. The example once set was soon followed by others. In the winter of 1875, survey operations were

* *North-East Frontier*, p. 123.

re-commenced, but in December Captain Butler received a mortal wound in an ambuscade at Pangti near Wokha. Lieutenant Woodthorpe promptly burnt Pangti, and the neighbouring villages remaining friendly, the work of the survey was carried to completion.

In August 1876, the Chief Commissioner again invited the attention of the Government of India to the continual aggressions of the Angamis, and more especially of the men of Khonoma and Mozema, upon Naga communities living under Manipur, and to the state of perpetual warfare which prevailed amongst the tribes. During the two preceding years, six villages had been plundered and 384 persons killed, chiefly by Khonoma and Mozema. The Supreme Government agreed that steps must now be taken to repress these outrages. While the matter was under consideration, Mozema raided the village of Gumaigaju near Asalu in the North Cachar Hills, and killed six British subjects. In December 1877, the Political Officer, Mr. Carnegy, accompanied by a force of 246 sepoy and police, captured Mozema and burnt the village, but the Nagas still continued to occupy the surrounding hills and harass the British troops. During the course of these operations, Mr. Carnegy was accidentally shot by his own sentry, and the submission of Mozema was finally received by Captain Williamson, the Inspector-General of Police.

In 1877, the Secretary of State assented to the proposal that the headquarters station should be moved into some locality in the interior of the hills, and that the district staff should be strengthened, so as to

An active policy decided on. Mr. Carnegy's death in 1877.

Occupation of Kohima, 1878.

admit of the more efficient management of the tribes. In November 1878, Kohima was occupied without opposition, and by this time sixteen Naga villages had tendered their submission.

Mr. Damant's murder, 1879.

The attitude of the tribes during that cold season was most encouraging, but in June 1879, there were signs of trouble brewing in the powerful village of Khonoma. The clouds, however, seemed to pass away, the villagers paid up a fine that was imposed upon them in July, and Mr. Damant proposed to make a tour in the Ao country during the following cold weather. Before starting, he decided to visit Khonoma, and, on October 13th, he set out with an escort of 21 sepoys and 65 police. It is said that an interpreter from Jotsoma warned him that the village was hostile, and on more than one occasion fell on his knees before him and begged him not to proceed. Mr. Damant declined to believe that there was any danger. Leaving half of his escort with the baggage at the foot of the hill, he advanced with the remainder up the steep pathway leading to the village. The gate was closed, and as he stood before it he was shot dead, and a volley was poured into his escort, who broke and fled. The Nagas then poured out of the village and down the hill, and completely dispersed the troops, killing 85 and wounding 19.

Siege of Kohima.

The news was carried the same day to Kohima, and a messenger was quickly sent to Wokha to call in the small detachment stationed there under Mr. Hinde. On October 21st, Kohima was besieged, but the troubles of the garrison did not last for long, as

on the 27th, Colonel Johnstone marched in, unopposed, with a strong force of Manipuris.

Within the short space of five years three British Officers had been murdered by the hill-men, and it was obviously time that the Nagas should be taught a lesson. A force consisting of the 44th Sylhet Light Infantry (the present 8th Gurkha Rifles), a detachment of the 43rd Assam Light Infantry (the present 7th Gurkha Rifles) and two mountain guns was sent into the hills. Khonoma was assaulted on the 22nd November. In the attack we lost two British Officers—Major Cock, the D.A.A.G., and Lieutenant Forbes; and the Subadar Major of the 44th Native Infantry killed, two British and two Native Officers wounded, and 44 of the rank and file killed and wounded. During the night the village was abandoned, and the Nagas retreated to a strongly fortified position on the crest of the Barail range, where, as they were excluded from their fields and villages, it was decided to reduce them by a blockade. Of the thirteen villages hostile to us, Piphima, Merrima, Sachima, Sephama, and Pachama were attacked and destroyed before the troops advanced against Khonoma, Lieutenant Maxwell being severely wounded before Sephama. The troops moved about the hills and punished the villages that had opposed us, but the Khonoma men still continued to hold out.

Towards the end of January, they perpetrated a raid of unusual daring and atrocity. A party of the beleaguered Nagas succeeded in making their way from the crest of the hill on which they had taken up their position, and marched to Baladhan, a tea-garden

Punitive measures in 1880.

Raid on Baladhan garden in Cachar.

in Cachar, fully 80 miles distant as the crow flies from Khonoma. They attacked the factory at night, killed the manager, Mr. Blyth, and sixteen of the coolies, and burnt down everything in the place. They then returned with such plunder as they could obtain to their original position.

**Submission
of Khonoma
and pacifica-
tion of
district.**

In March, the Khonoma men at last submitted, but they were ordered to vacate their village site, and their terraced fields were confiscated. The latter part of the order was subsequently withdrawn, as it was found impossible to induce them to take up land elsewhere; and no other Nagas ventured to occupy the confiscated fields from fear of possible reprisals. The villagers were assessed to revenue, which was at first imposed at the rate of one rupee, and one maund of rice per house. Subsequently it was altered to two rupees per house, the rate usually paid at that time by other hill tribes in Assam; and the process of pacification and the extension of our rule was steadily continued. For some time, however, small punitive expeditions were a regular feature of the administration of the district, as it was only by this means that independent Nagas could be taught that the lives and property of those who had submitted to us must be respected. None of these expeditions met with any serious opposition, and there was no repetition of the painful incidents of the seventies.

**Burning of
Ratami.**

In May 1888, the Semas of Ratami murdered two Lhotas who were British subjects, and declined to obey the order of the Deputy Commissioner directing them to come in and answer to the charge. A strong force was led against the village by Mr. McCabe. As the villagers

opposed the advance of the troops, it was necessary to open fire, and some 50 or 60 of the enemy were killed. The punishment of Ratami had a most excellent effect, and two other villages that had committed murders paid up the fines imposed without demur.

In 1885, Mr. McCabe made a promenade through the Ao country and met with no serious opposition, and in 1889 this territory was incorporated within the boundaries of the district. In April 1888, Mr. McCabe crossed the Dikho with a small force of military police, to punish the four villages Yajim, Chihu, Noksen, and Litam, who were guilty of raiding on the western or British side of the Dikho. The four villages were burned, and, though some resistance was offered, it was brushed aside without much difficulty. The Mozung tribe of Nagas, to which these villages belonged, were not, however, the men to acquiesce in punishment of this kind, without attempting reprisals. They found themselves unable to offer any effective opposition to our troops, but in June 1888, they suddenly attacked the two Ao villages of Mongsemdi and Lungkung, and killed 148 persons in the former and 40 in the latter. Steps were immediately taken to protect our territory from a repetition of these outrages, and a guard of 50 men was posted in a strong stockade at Mongsemdi. The stockade was attacked shortly afterwards at night by a body of Mozung Nagas, but they were beaten off without difficulty. In January 1889, the Deputy Commissioner led a force of 200 men across the Dikho to punish the offenders. Feeling that the troops were too strong to be opposed, they offered little resistance, and burnt five

Raid and
punishment
of Mozung-
jami in 1888.

of their villages, in the hope apparently that this would serve to check our advance. Altogether ten villages, including Mozungjami, were destroyed, with a considerable quantity of grain; but only five or six of the enemy were killed, and the expedition failed to recover some captives who were said to have been carried off from the Ao villages. On his return from Mozungjami, the Deputy Commissioner was again compelled to recross the Dikho, to punish Tangsa and two *khels* of Yangia, who had been guilty of murdering Nagas who were to all intents and purposes the subjects of the Crown. It was found impossible to procure the surrender of the actual offenders, and the houses of the guilty communities were therefore burnt.

The Nagas mistake justice for timidity, and Yampong is burnt in 1892.

In 1892, the village of Yampong was burnt, under circumstances which clearly show how prone the savage is to mistake clemency for weakness. A native of a village called Sangtam killed an Ao who had crossed the Dikho on a trading expedition, and then fled to Yampong. The Deputy Commissioner proceeded to Yampong and demanded the surrender of the murderer; but the villagers declared that they were unable to comply with his request as the man had fled once more and they were ignorant of his whereabouts. The Deputy Commissioner then burnt the murderer's house, and ordered the people of Yampong not to harbour him in future; but as they were not in any way responsible for the murder did not inflict any punishment upon them. Fear was the only motive to which the Nagas could ascribe such leniency, and Yampong at once proceeded to attack the villagers that had furnished the expedition

with supplies. The Deputy Commissioner was accordingly compelled to return; the people of Yampong opposed his advance, and then evacuated the village, and, as they declined to come in and surrender or pay a fine, there was nothing for it but to fire the houses. Shortly afterwards the villagers tendered their submission, and thus afforded another instance of the good effect exercised on the Naga mind by the burning of his home. As far as that part of the country was concerned, it was, the Deputy Commissioner said, an undoubted fact that burning a village led almost immediately to the establishment of good relations with the inhabitants. Strangely enough, after they had been burnt out, the people seemed to consider that they had become the children of the Maharani.

Since that date it has only been necessary to despatch one regular punitive expedition, though the Deputy Commissioner, when touring in what was known as the area of political control, was generally accompanied by a guard; and from time to time it was found necessary to punish villages who declined to surrender the actual persons guilty of a murder. In November 1903, the Pelasi *khel* of Mozungjami killed two Aos who had gone across the Dikho to trade, and in the following month the Chongpu *khel* carried off three mithun from British territory. It was impossible to obtain reparation for these outrages, and in January 1905, the Deputy Commissioner proceeded to the village with a force of 100 men of the military police. The inhabitants abandoned their homes, and killed two of the transport coolies who were straggling, and as a punishment the Deputy

Only one expedition in the past thirteen years.

Commissioner burnt the village and killed a considerable number of pigs and cattle.

Alterations
in the area
of the dis-
trict in
1905.

Since the incorporation of the Ao country, the area of the district has been diminished by the transfer of the valley of the Dhansiri and the Mikir Hills to Sibsagar and Nowgong, and increased by the addition of the territory which was formerly known as the area of political control, and a strip of country lying on the east.



CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

Area and density—Towns and villages—Growth of the population—Immigration—Sex and civil condition—Infirmities—Religions—Occupations.

Few districts have experienced more changes in their boundaries, and consequently in their areas, than the Naga Hills. In the previous chapter it has been shown that the boundaries of British territory have been slowly and gradually extended, and this, where the adjacent country is occupied by savage tribes, is a process that is always liable to be continued. The independent villages from time to time raid into British territory, or murder British subjects who have gone for purposes of trade beyond the frontier, and punishment and pacification follow in due course. The villages beyond our frontier are enamoured of the security that our rule affords, and apply to be taken under our protection, and the boundaries of the district have accordingly been from time to time enlarged. In 1890, the country occupied by the Aos was

Area and density.

formed into the subdivision of Mokokchung, and in 1903, the area of what was known as the Political Control was definitely incorporated in the district. The construction of the railway through the Nambar forest up to Lakhimpur has, on the other hand, rendered it easier to administer the valley of the Dhansiri and the Mikir Hills from Nowgong and Golaghat, and in 1898, a large portion of the district of the Naga Hills was transferred to Sibsagar and Nowgong. In 1901, the area of the district was 3,070 square miles, the population was 102,402, and the density 83 to the square mile. The area of the Kohima subdivision was 2,837 square miles, and the density 29 to the square mile, while in Mokokchung, which covered an area of 738 square miles, there was a density of 46.

At first sight, these figures would suggest that the district is sparsely peopled, but this is not the case. A country which is entirely composed of hills must obviously include large tracts of land which are quite unfit for cultivation. Most of the remainder is only fit for *jhuming*, and *jhuming* postulates a large area of fallowing land.* In parts of the district there is no doubt plenty of waste land on which *jhum* crops might easily be raised, but this is not the case in the Angami territory. Some of the larger villages

* It is true that the Maring Nagas in Manipur who cultivate on the *jhum* system have not sufficient land to allow of their leaving it fallow for any length of time, but the crops obtained are poor, and the *jhums* are covered with an elaborate system of herring-bone drains to prevent the rain from washing all the surface soil from the slopes.

like Khonoma are positively pressed for land, and the people have carved out into terraced rice fields the most precipitous and unlikely looking slopes.

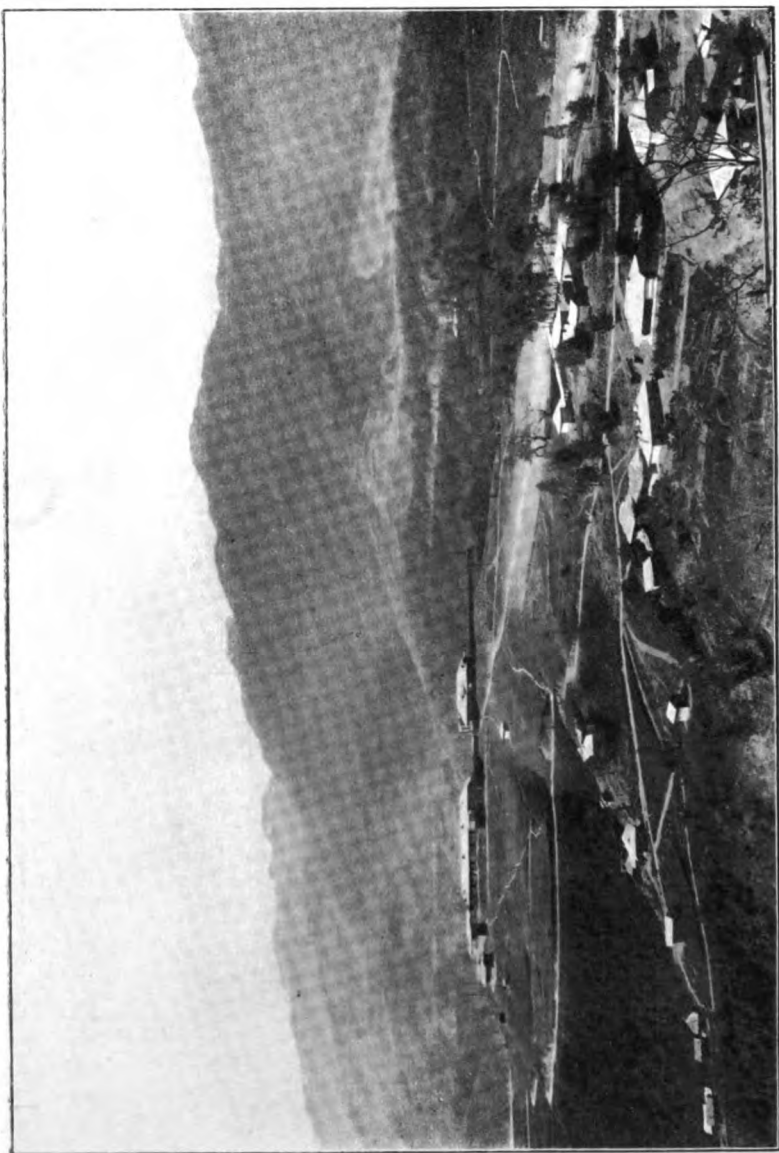
In 1901 the district contained one town, if town it ^{Towns and villages.} can be called, and 292 villages. The Naga villages are very different from the straggling groves of plantains, palms, and bamboos, to which, in the plains, this name is usually applied. They are generally built along the tops of hills, and in the old days of intertribal feuds were strongly fortified and entered through a village gate. In the plains of Assam it is often hard to say where one village ends and the next begins; but there is none of this uncertainty in the Naga Hills. The village is like a little town which often stands out sharp against the sky line, and it possesses distinct and definite village lands which are cultivated by its inhabitants, or are sometimes let to their less fortunate neighbours.

Amongst the Aos and Lhotas the houses are generally arranged in regular streets along the tops of the ridge. The Angamis and the Semas place their houses in any locality within the village wall that seems convenient. The hill on which Khonoma stands is very steep, and the houses are built on little terraces along the sides. The roof of one house is often several feet below the plinth of its next-door neighbour, and some of the village paths are quite precipitous. Building land is very scarce, and a site will fetch from Rs. 300 to Rs. 400. The following description of an Ao village is taken from Colonel Woodthorpe's Report on the survey operations in the Naga Hills in 1874-75.

"The villages, which are usually large, as a rule occupy the most commanding points along the ridges, and the approaches to them are exceedingly pretty. Broad roads, bordered with grass and low shrubs, lead up, through avenues of fine trees, to the main entrance, which is generally very strongly guarded by two or three panjied ditches, running right across the ridge and stockaded on the inner bank. The stockades are strongly built of a double line of posts, supporting a wall of interlaced bamboo, and are capable of offering a good resistance. The outermost ditch is generally about 200 or 300 yards, or even more, away from the village, the second being situated between it and the one enclosing the village. The gate through the stockade of this last ditch into the village is cut out of one huge block, and is frequently four or five feet broad and about six feet high. A large gable roof is constructed over it, giving it a resemblance to our old lychgates at home. Lookouts are built commanding the entrance, and in some cases little huts are constructed in large trees outside the most advanced stockades on the main roads, communications being preserved with the interior by means of long ladders and causeways."

Many of the village gates are still in existence, great doors made of thick planks, adorned on the outside with roughly carved bas-reliefs of animals and men. But they are almost invariably left open, and, even were they closed, the would-be-visitor would have no difficulty in walking round them. When a *ghenna* is in progress the gate is closed, and visitors are rigorously excluded. The Naga villages are extremely dirty, the cattle, fowls, and pigs all live in the house inhabited by the family, and there is generally a great heap of manure in the courtyard. The houses are packed close together, and there are no fruit trees, bamboos, or gardens round them. But this absence of vegetation has no doubt a most salutary effect, as it leaves the place exposed to the purifying influence of the sun and air.

The following abstract shows the total number of



KOHIMA.

villages occupied by each tribe at the last census, and the average population of each village:—

					No. of villages.	Average population.
Angamis	...	...	...	...	64	450
Lhotas	...	...	...	...	61	293
Aos	...	...	...	...	52	578
Rengma	...	...	...	...	10	420
Kacha Naga	...	...	...	...	26	248
Sema	...	...	...	...	9	523
Kuki	...	...	...	...	26	128

The largest villages are to be found amongst the Angamis and the Aos, and some of the more important ones almost attain the dignity of little towns. The village of Kohima, for instance, which stands on the hill just above Kohima station, contains over 800 houses, and has a population of nearly 3,000 souls.

The station of Kohima is situated on a saddle on the watershed, and commands a fine view down the valley of the Rengmapani or Zubza to the north, and over a great expanse of hilly country towards the east. There is none of the fine open rolling country which is the great attraction of Shillong, and the roads are cut out along the edge of the hill-sides, which fall away in sharp ravines from the watershed. In the centre of the saddle stands the old fort, in which are situated the treasury, the magazine, the post and telegraph office, and the office of the Deputy Commissioner. A little to the east, but lower down the hill, are the parade ground and the quarters of the regimental officers, with the sepoys' lines in the immediate vicinity. On the northern side of the saddle are the military

police lines, the shops of the few traders that the town possesses, and a very small bazar, supplies being extremely scarce in Kohima. A little further down the hill are the huts of a few Manipuris, Khasis, and Nagas who have left their native villages to take up their residence in the metropolis of the district. The station is lighted by nine acetylene lamps, and has an excellent but somewhat scanty water-supply, which is brought from Polubadze hill, and distributed by pipes all over the civil lines and the cantonment.

Growth of
the popula-
tion.

1881...95,570
1891...98,687
1901...102,402

It is difficult to measure the growth of the population in the district. The first census was taken in 1891, and, though a careful estimate was made in 1881, the district as then constituted did not include the Mokokchung subdivision (population 1891—26,416), and did include the valley of the Dhansiri and the Mikir Hills, which, in 1898, were transferred to Sibsagar and Nowgong. The abstract in the margin shows the population based on the assumption that the boundaries of the district were the same in 1881 and 1891 as they were at the last census. It will be seen that the increase is comparatively small, but the Nagas are by no means a prolific race. In 1901, there were only 85 children under five for every 100 married women between 15 and 40, as compared with 115 and 110 in Nowgong and Kamrup. The number of childless married couples is unusually large, and even where a woman does have children it is seldom that she becomes the mother of a large family. The Nagas pride themselves on the strength and endurance of their womenkind, and say that in these respects they

are little inferior to the men. These qualities have doubtless been developed by the continuous hard work they are called on to perform, and such development is not unfrequently attended by a weakening of the reproductive powers. The Semas form an exception to the general rule, and this particular tribe is said to be increasing rapidly in numbers.

There is little immigration into the hills, and <sup>Immigra-
tion.</sup> in 1901, 94 per cent. of the population had been born within the boundaries of the district, while another 4 per cent. were natives of Assam. Most of the foreigners were Nepalese, who were either serving in the regiment or the military police battalion, or had taken their discharge and settled down to cultivation. The rest of the foreign population consisted of a few coolies and cartmen from Bengal and the United Provinces, a few artisans from the Punjab, and a few traders from Marwar. Emigration from the district could not be measured with any degree of accuracy, owing to the changes in boundary that had recently taken place. A certain number of Nagas go down to the plains in the cold weather to trade or to look for work on tea-gardens, but there is very little migration of a permanent character, the hillman seldom caring to leave his native village.

In 1901, there was a preponderance of the male <sup>Sex and
Civil condi-
tion.</sup> element in the population, there being only 982 females to every 1,000 males. This disproportion between the sexes is, however, entirely due to the foreigners, and amongst those born and censused in the district the number of women was almost exactly equal to

the number of the men. Women are in a minority amongst the Angamis and the Kaccha Nagas, and in a majority amongst the Lhotas and the Aos. Infant marriage is practically unknown. Out of the 29,621 females in the district, who in 1901 had performed the marriage ceremony, only 114 were below the age of 15. Most of the tribes allow their girls great liberty, not to say license, prior to their marriage, but so long as they are living with their husbands they generally make faithful wives. The Lhotas are, however, an exception to this rule, and amongst them the *ménage à trois* is by no means unusual. Many of the customs that govern the relations between the sexes are distinctly curious. The Angamis, for instance, shave the heads of their unmarried girls, a fashion which goes far to counterbalance the effect of the good looks that many of them undoubtedly possess. Bachelors, too, are required to wear their hair in a fringe which is strongly suggestive of a coster belle and which is extremely unbecoming in comparison with the waving locks that adorn the forehead of the married man. The different customs of the various tribes are, however, discussed at length in Mr. Davis' monograph on the Nagas, and need not be referred to here. The slow growth of the population, to which reference has been already made, is, perhaps, to some extent due to the fact that the proportion of potential mothers, *i.e.*, of married women between 15 and 40 is below the Provincial average. They form only 152 per mille of the total population as compared with 157 per mille in the Province of Assam as a whole, and 170 per mille in the Central Provinces.

From the following abstract it will be seen that, *Infirmities.* though the district is singularly free from leprosy, deaf-mutism and blindness are extraordinarily common :—

Out of 10,000 males, number afflicted with	Naga Hills.	Assam.	India.
Insanity	... 4	5	3
Deaf-mutism	... 49	9	6
Blindness	... 17	10	12
Leprosy	... 3	13	5

The figures given are for males only, but deaf-mutism is almost as prevalent amongst the women, and blindness is even more common. The Deputy Commissioner, who was consulted as to the accuracy of the figures, wrote as follows: "I am not at all surprised to hear that the rate is very high, as in almost every village, certainly amongst the Angamis, there are deaf mutes. In some of the smaller villages every second person is either deaf or dumb, or insane. This I know from my personal experience. The small villages to the north of Kohima are the worst in this respect. I can only attribute the prevalence of the infirmity to the results of intermarriage, and the fact that it is more prevalent in the smaller villages would corroborate this, as Nagas, as a rule, marry in their own villages."—

The principal languages spoken in the hills are *Language.* Angami, Ao, Lhota, Rengma and Sema. Ao again is divided into two distinct dialects—Chungli and Mongsen. The number of persons belonging to each of these five tribes, as returned at the census of 1901, will be found in Table II. These languages were originally derived from the same stock, but, at the present day, they have

diverged so far from one another, that a thorough knowledge of one of the five, helps little towards the comprehension of the other four. An excellent account of these languages will be found in the Report on the Census of Assam in 1891, Volume I, pages 168-176, and the Linguistic Survey of India, by Dr. Grierson, Volume III, Part II, pages 194-289.

Tribes.

The principal tribes living in the district are the Angamis, the Aos, the Semas, and the Lhotas; and after them, but *longo intervallo*, come the Kaccha Nagas and the Rengmas. The numbers returned under each of these tribes at the census of 1901 will be found in Table III, but since that date about 80,000 people, most of whom are Semas, have been included in the boundaries of the district. The most warlike and important of these tribes are the Angamis, who occupy the country in the neighbourhood of Kohima. North of them come the Rengmas, then the Lhotas, while north and east of the Lhotas are the Aos, whose villages stretch up to the Dikho river. The Semas live east of the Rengmas and the Aos. Full details with regard to the manners and customs of the various tribes of Nagas will be found in Mr. Davis' exhaustive treatise on the subject. The only other tribes that are found in any numbers in the district are the Kacharis and the Kukis. Accounts of these tribes will be found in the Gazetteer of Cachar, a district to which they more properly belong.

Religion.

The great mass of the Nagas are still faithful to the religion of their forefathers, and in 1901, 96 per cent. of the population were described as 'animistic.'

The people believe in the existence of a supreme creator, but, as, like the Hindu Brahma, his work is done, they do not trouble themselves very much about him. Sickness and other misfortunes which befall them they ascribe to the malignant action of evil spirits, who they endeavour to propitiate with sacrifices. Most of them believe that there is something in a man which survives the death of the body, but what it is, and where it goes, they cannot say. Further information on this subject will be found in Mr. Davis' monograph. Hindus formed 3 per cent. of the population, but practically all of them were foreigners. Hinduism has no attraction for the Naga. In the plains converts gravitate towards it in obedience to the law which draws the smaller body towards the greater. All men like to follow the fashion, even though it may entail considerable personal inconvenience, so year by year the animistic tribes are abandoning their pork, and fowl, and beer, though many a longing eye is cast upon the flesh-pots of Egypt. But in the hills no distinction is conferred by Hinduism, and nothing less than a strong desire for social advancement would induce a Naga to adopt a religion which would impose on him so many troublesome restrictions.

Christianity, too, has as yet made little progress. In 1876, a branch of the American Baptist Mission was opened at Molung, which, in 1894, was transferred to Impur. About 1879, another member of this Mission took up his residence at Kohima, and work was started amongst the Angami Nagas. In 1904, there were altogether four missionaries, three of whom were assisted

by their wives, living amongst the Naga tribes. The number of Native Christians has increased, but progress has hitherto been slow. In 1891, there were 211 Native Christians in the district; in 1901 there were 579, nearly all of whom were Baptists. The Naga is a much more conservative person than the Khasi, and finds it difficult to abandon the customs of his ancestors. Most of them are fairly contented with their present mode of life, and it is hardly likely that there will be any general change of faith for some time to come.

Minor Religions.—Buddhists 337; Moslems 142; Jains 20; Sikhs 3.

The abstract in the margin gives details for other religions which had but few representatives at the time of the last census. Nearly all of these persons were found in the station of Kohima. The Buddhists are Nepalese serving in the regiment or the military police, the Jains are shop-keepers from Marwar, the Muhammadans artisans and traders.

Occupations.

At the census of 1901 the occupations of the people were divided into 520 different heads, for which details will be found in the second volume of the Census Report. This elaborate classification was intended for the more developed parts of India, and the occupations of the natives of a hill district in Assam practically begin and end with agriculture. Agriculture was the means of support of 93 per cent. of the population, but though cultivation is the mainstay of the Naga, he now and then combines it with some subsidiary occupation. Most of them, for instance, will do a little trading if they can, and many of them turn out to work as coolies during the cold weather. The soldiers and military policemen with their families formed 2 per cent. of the population

tion, and 1 per cent. were described as beggars, though these were probably only aged and infirm persons who were supported by their relatives and friends. The number of persons returned under each of the eight main orders, and the proportion that they formed of the whole, was as follows :—

		Percentage on total population.
A. Government	2,388	2·3
B. Pasture and agriculture	96,059	93·8
C. Personal service... ..	424	0·4
D. Preparation and supply of material substance	1,034	1·0
E. Commerce, transport and storage ...	371	0·4
F. Professions	325	0·3
G. Unskilled labour not agricultural ...	364	0·4
H. Means of subsistence independent of occupation	1,437	1·4

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Jhum Cultivation—The Terraced cultivation of the Angamis—Agricultural implements—Live stock—Forests.

Jhum cultivation.

THE ordinary method of cultivation practised in the hills is the system known as *jhum*. The jungle growing on the hill-side is cut down, left for six weeks or so to dry, and burned between January and March. The boughs of larger trees, and any rubbish that was not consumed in the first conflagration are then collected and burnt, and the ground hoed up. The seeds of hill rice, millet, and job's-tears are scattered amongst the ashes, or dibbled in, and the fields carefully raked over till they are quite smooth. While the crop is growing it is weeded once or twice. The millet is harvested in July, the rice in November, and the job's-tears in the following month. Chillies, pumpkins, and *til* are also grown in the *jhums*, and on the slopes of the lower hills above Golaghat cotton is an important crop.

The system of *jhum* cultivation has several

drawbacks. The crop is entirely dependent on the rainfall for the moisture it requires to bring it to maturity, much time and trouble has to be expended in the clearing of the *jhums*, and the amount of land required is very large. A *jhum* is, as a rule, only cultivated for two seasons in succession and then allowed to fallow for seven or eight years. After the second year, the yield falls off, and the weeds spring up and choke the crop. There is a risk, too, that the roots of the scrub jungle may be killed; and the land depends to some extent for its fertility on the re-growth of this jungle, and its subsequent conversion into a bed of ash manure. A village thus requires of culturable land about five times the area actually under cultivation at any given time, and the outlying *jhums* of the larger communities must, of necessity, be sometimes situated at a considerable distance from the village site. On the other hand the yield of the *jhum* is large, and as long as they have sufficient land available the Nagas seem to prefer *jhuming* to any other system of cultivation.

A considerable area is *jhumed* by the Angami Nagas, but their desire for rice, which does not do well in *jhums* at an elevation of more than 4,000 feet above the level of the sea, and the pressure of population on the soil, has driven them to adopt the system of terraced cultivation. The slopes of the hills below their villages are cut out into a succession of terraces, which are irrigated from the hill streams, whose water is carefully distributed through little channels over every step in the series. When the slope is fairly gentle these terraces are sometimes nearly twenty yards

The terraced cultivation of the Angamis.

in breadth and not more than two feet high; but fields as large as this are by no means common. The average terrace is more than three feet high, and is not more than three or four yards wide, and is often built up with stone retaining walls. In places these stone walls are as much as five feet high, in places the terraces are not more than two feet wide, and as they have to follow the contour of the hill-side they are never of any considerable length.

An ample supply of water is an absolute necessity for terraced cultivation, and, where this is to be had, fields are cut out on slopes which are almost precipitous in their steepness. Sometimes the terraces are simply dug out of the earth and are not faced with stone, but near Khonoma they even go so far as to build low walls across their *jhum* land to prevent the soil from being washed away by the rain. This system of terraced cultivation was probably introduced from the south, and without it the large and populous Angami villages could not exist, as they have not sufficient land in their vicinity to support them by the wasteful system of *jhuming*.

The initial labour required to make these terraced fields is very great, but, once made, they give less trouble than a *jhum*. They are close to the village site, and jungle clearing is not necessary. Many of these terraces are almost entirely dependent on the rainfall, and fields which can be kept under water during the cold weather are particularly valuable. This irrigated rice is raised in the same way as the *sali dhan* of Assam. The soil is thoroughly saturated with moisture, and then held

up till it is reduced to a rich puddle. The rice has in the meanwhile been sown on the hill-side, and when the plants are from a month to six weeks old, they are transplanted into the fields. Harvesting goes on in December; the ears are cut off short by the head and threshed in the field before being carried up to the village.

The Angamis generally store their grain in the house in huge baskets about four feet high and proportionately wide, but most of the tribes keep it in granaries outside the village, from fear of fire or rats. There is nothing, except his sense of honour and the severity of the punishment that would follow on detection, to prevent a man from helping himself to his neighbour's grain; and the existence of this custom is a striking testimony to the high standard of honesty observed in their relations with one another.

Amongst other crops the Nagas raise cucumbers, Other crops, gourds, a bean not unlike a large variety of French bean, and a little indigo, which is intended solely for home use. A few plants of tobacco are also grown in the village, and the fibre of a nettle is used for thread though the plant is hardly cultivated in the sense in which that term is usually employed. Attempts have been made to introduce the cultivation of potatoes, but they are at present chiefly grown by foreign settlers in the neighbourhood of Kohima. The Nagas are not such radicals and progressives as the Khasis, and are not so ready to abandon the traditions of their ancestors. Cotton is grown by the Lhota Nagas on the lower hills, and in 1903-04, it was estimated that about 4,500 maunds were exported to Golaghat. Maize is grown, but is not much in

favour with the Nagas, and is generally raised by foreigners residing in the district. Oranges are planted by the Lhotas and Aos on the hills overlooking the Sibsagar district, and peaches, pears, pineapples, leeches, mangoes, and European vegetables do well in the lower hills, though they have not yet been adopted by the Nagas.

**Agricultural
implements.**

The following is a list of the agricultural implements in use—(1) a short handled hoe, (2) a dao or bill hook, (3) a bamboo rake, (4) a wooden pestle and mortar, (5) a wooden mallet to break up the clods, (6) a sickle, (7) a bamboo flail, and (8) an axe.

Live-stock.

The live-stock of the Nagas consist of mithun (*bos frontalis*), cattle, pigs, and dogs, the latter being included as they are a favourite article of food. The cattle are a sturdy little breed. There is no dearth of grazing ground, they are never worked, and as they are not milked, the calf does not suffer from want of proper nourishment. The pure-bred Naga bull is black, and if it has no white about it, will fetch from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50, a cow costing from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25. There are no bullocks in the Naga villages, and these animals are simply kept for food and for the manure they yield, great heaps of which are generally to be seen in the court-yard of a Naga house. Mithun are kept by the Kacha Nagas, the Semas, and the Kukis, and cost from Rs. 30 to Rs. 60. The pigs are of the ordinary black Indian breed and are fine healthy animals, in spite of the fact that every male is gelt when it is less than two months old, and that the race is continued by the most immature of sires.

Dogs, as a rule, are the ordinary pariah breed. Foot and mouth disease breaks out occasionally in the hills, but the cattle are, on the whole, fairly free from sickness.

In their natural state the hills were originally ^{Forests.} clothed with evergreen forest. This forest still remains on the more precipitous slopes and in the valley bottoms, but from most of the hill-sides the trees have vanished before the dao and torch of the cultivator, and the sites of fallowing *jhums* are generally covered by a dense jungle of bamboos. There is only one reserved forest in the district, which is situated on the borders of Sibsagar, at the point where the Disai river debouches on the plains. This reserve was constituted in 1902, and covers an area of 68 square miles. The forest covers the low outlying hills and the intervening valleys, and contains nahor (*mesua ferrea*), ajhar (*lagerstræmia flos reginæ*), titasapa (*michelia champaca*), sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), poma (*cedrela toona*), gunserai (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), amari (*amoora spectabilis*), khakan (*duabanga soneratioides*), hollock (*terminalia bicolorata*), Hollong (*dipterocarpus bondii*), and hingori (*castanopsis rufescens*). The receipts from this reserve in 1902-03 were about Rs. 1,200. This forest is managed from the Sibsagar district, to which for all intents and purposes it belongs, and generally speaking no attempt is made at forest conservancy or management in the Naga Hills. In order, however, to maintain a supply of timber near Kohima, and to prevent the station water-supply from contamination, the timber on the Pulebadze hill is reserved, and may not be felled except under the order of the Deputy Commissioner. Very little rubber

is tapped in the district, but agar (*aquilaria agallocha* cinnamon, wild cardamoms, and wax are found. Wax was selling at Kohima in 1904 at Re. 1 per seer.



CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES—ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

COMMUNICATIONS AND TRADE.

Arts and Industries—Weaving—Iron Work and Pottery—Mats—Salt and Silk—Rents—Wages—Prices—Food—Dress—Houses—Economic Condition of the People—Cart road—Bridle Paths—Post and Telegraph—Trade.

THE industries practised in the hills are small and unimportant. Nearly all the cloths worn by the Nagas are made at home by the women. The loom is of the simplest character, and consists of little more than a few sticks, on which the warp is supported. Descriptions of mechanical processes of this nature are not very intelligible without a complete series of diagrams. Those interested in the subject will find a long account of the Naga methods of spinning and weaving, and of the cloths produced, in the Monograph on the cotton fabrics of Assam, published by the Superintendent, Government Printing, at Calcutta, in 1897, pages 61-63 and 164-174. The cloths are

Arts and Industries

Weaving.

strong and warm, and are generally of a distinctly picturesque and pleasing pattern. The miniature kilt worn by the Angamis as a loin cloth is made of dark-blue thread, and is often embroidered with cowries. Their outer cloth has generally a dark-blue body, with a broad border of green and orange, or red and yellow stripes. Under this they wear a white cloth, with a border of blue or red. The Semas and Lhotas generally wear cloths made of broad stripes of white and blue, while blue and red is the favourite colour of the Aos. The Kacha Nagas affect a white cloth with a narrow border of madder and blue.

**Iron work
and pottery.**

Village blacksmiths make daos, spear-heads, hoes, and knives from imported iron. The iron-work is of a very simple character, but the shafts of the spears and the handles of the daos are sometimes decorated with goats' hair, dyed dark-blue, white, and red. Earthenware pots are made at Viswema and Kuzama amongst the Angami Nagas, and at Chanki and Japu amongst the Aos. The clay is laid on in strips and not fashioned on the wheel, but the outturn is not large, as empty gourds and sections of bamboo are often used where a plainsman would employ an earthenware or metal vessel.

Mats.

Nearly all the tribes make baskets and mats of split bamboo, and the Angamis store their rice in huge baskets about four feet high and of a proportionately wide girth. They are also very clever at making leggings of split cane dyed a bright red or yellow. The village gates sometimes have the rough figure of a man or of a mithun head cut on them; and a wealthy man

occasionally makes some attempt to decorate the front planks of his house. Some of the Angamis erect over the graves wooden figures which possess a certain rude merit, and in both Angami and Sema villages the exploits of a man alike in love and war are commemorated by quaint carvings. Salt is made at the brine wells Salt and silk. of the Kacha Naga village of Lakema. The water is evaporated in iron cauldrons, but the cost of the firewood is heavy, and the salt is sold for 8 annas a seer, or for four times more than the imported article. It is very dirty, and is evidently full of impurities, but that appears to be an additional attraction to the Naga. It is regarded as a luxury and is only used to suck between sips of their national beverage *zu*. Salt is also imported in considerable quantities from the independent villages, Melomi and Primi. An attempt has recently been made to introduce the cultivation of the mulberry silk worm. The climate is doubtless favourable for sericulture, but the dirt of the Naga village is likely to prejudicially affect the worm.

The standard of measurement for Naga land is not ← Rents. area, but the number of loads of paddy that it yields. Terraced rice land is both sold and let. Some years ago, when the construction of the cart road had put a great quantity of money in circulation in the district, rupees, as the Naga expresses it, were 'cheap.' An acre of terraced rice land near Khonoma at that time fetched as much as Rs. 600; but now, that rupees are 'dear,' it can be bought for about one-third of that sum. An acre of terraced rice land lets from three to nine rupees a year according to quality, while an acre of *jhum* land can be

rented for the two seasons, during which it is cultivated for a rupee and a half. It must, however, be borne in mind that the absence of any system of measurement renders the exact pitch of these rents a little doubtful.

Wages. During the cold weather Nagas will work fairly readily on the road for six annas a day. Off the cart road, coolies are the usual means of transport, and receive eight annas a march near Kohima, and from four to eight annas in the eastern part of the district. The government rate is usually accepted by the Nagas as their standard in their dealings with one another, but an exchange of labour often obviates the necessity for making any actual money payment.

Prices. The price of rice is not of much importance except to the foreign population, as the Nagas seldom either buy or sell. Since the construction of the cart road, rice has been comparatively cheap at Kohima, as it is imported from Manipur. Between 1898-99 and 1902-03, it ranged from Re. 1-14 to Rs. 3-8 per maund, which was very much less than the prices previously ruling in the bazar. In 1903-04, it suddenly rose to Rs. 5-4 per maund, as it was feared that, owing to the smallness of the rainfall, the harvest in Manipur would be a very poor one. Since the completion of the railway to Dimapur, there has been a great reduction in the charges on account of freight, and a consequent general fall in prices. Dal and salt sold respectively for Rs. 11 and Rs. 10 per maund in 1896-97, but in 1903-04, they were selling for Rs. 5-8-0 and Rs. 4-8-0 per maund.

Food. The staple food of the people is rice, but the Nagas eat meat whenever they can get it, and are quite

indifferent as to the stage of putrefaction that it may have reached. Beef and pork are probably more often eaten than other kinds of flesh, but this is only because they are more easily procurable. Roasted dog is much esteemed, and, apart from milk, there is hardly anything which the Naga will not eat. Why they abstain from milk is not quite clear. They do not seem to have any prejudice against it, but say that they have never learnt to milk their cows, and that if the calf is deprived of milk it cannot thrive. They have no prejudice against the leavings of a European, and a Naga gladly accepts anything that may be over from the Saheb's lunch, and picks the chicken bones as cleanly as a dog. When a cow is killed the bones are not thrown away till every particle of flesh has been gnawed off them, and the houses often reek with the stench of these putrifying fragments. All the tribes consume enormous quantities of rice beer, which seems to serve as food as well as drink. The way in which this beer is brewed is described in the paragraph on excise.

The dress of the Nagas varies from zero to a comparatively high figure, both from the point of view of quantity and quality. The dress of the naked Nagas, who live in the extreme north-east corner of the district, consists of a few strips of blackened cane or a broad strip of white bark, bound tightly round the waist, a large tail of bark being often left hanging down behind. The Angami Naga, on the other hand, will wear in the winter as many as four large shawls, which afford a really efficient protection against the cold. Their small blue kilts are often embroidered with

cowries; and their gaily-coloured cane gaiters, their ornaments of pigs' tusks, and their collarettes and armlets of goats' hair dyed flaming red, are remarkably effective and picturesque.

Houses.

The Naga house is almost invariably dark and dirty, but the style of building differs very considerably amongst the different tribes. The Angami house is faced with planks, and has a thatched roof that slopes from the ridge pole to within a few feet of the ground. The side walls are made of reeds, or thatch, or planks, and, as they have no windows, the interior of the building is extremely dark. A fair-sized house is about 28 feet long and 22 feet broad, and the roof projects some four feet more in front of the front wall, thus forming a small porch. The house is divided into three rooms. In the outer room stand the huge baskets in which the rice is stored, and it is here that the cattle are stabled for the night. In the inner rooms the family cook, and eat, and sleep. An Angami house is usually a very filthy place. The floor is made of earth, fowls and cattle live with the family, and in addition to this there is often a horrible stench from putrifying flesh. The people sleep on planks, and for their bedding use a quilt made out of old clothes patched together. The houses of the wealthy men of the village are built on the same plan but are larger, and the planks in front are sometimes adorned with simple carvings. If the owner has performed a special *ghenna*, he is allowed to put up two curved beams in the front of the house, which meet over the roof tree in the form of horns, and are a conspicuous feature in an

Angami village. The houses of the other tribes differ to some extent from those of the Angamis, and are described at length in Mr. Davis' Monograph.

Most of the Nagas have a sufficiency of food and clothing, but there is little accumulated capital, and some villages are said to experience difficulty in raising the very moderate revenue imposed on them. Apart from the cotton, chillies, and *pan* exported to Golaghat, there is nothing grown for sale, and cash is generally obtained by working for the Public Works Department, and occasionally on tea-gardens in the winter time. The cash expenditure of the people is, however, very small, and generally they seem fairly well-to-do. The following account is taken from the report of the Deputy Commissioner in 1901-02:—

Economic
condition of
the people.

“Rather than cultivate sufficient rice to supply their wants, the Kukis prefer to loaf, and to subsist towards the end of the season on jungle roots and plants. The Kacha Nagas are nearly as bad. One would think they would be glad to earn a little money by working on the bridle path, and doing cooly work, but this is not the case. They never lose an opportunity of trying to get out of doing the very small amount of cooly work which they are called upon to perform. The other tribes in the district, except the people of Tamlu, who are confirmed opium-eaters, are extremely industrious and hard-working, and withal light-hearted and good-tempered. It is pleasant to see them trudging up to their villages at dusk, singing and laughing after a long day's work. The Angamis particularly like good living and fine clothes, and do themselves as well as they can afford to. One is glad to think that their material prosperity has greatly increased since our advent to the district. I am told that in the old days a man with three *dhulis* of *dhan* in his house was considered wealthy. Now it is a common occurrence to find five or six *dhulis* in an ordinary house, while in wealthy houses there are many more.

Their lives being secure, they can cultivate at greater distances from their villages than formerly. Their cattle, too, are safe from hostile raids, and can be pastured on the best grazing grounds, however far from the village. Judging from the anxiety of tribes outside our border to be brought under our control, our rule appears to be popular among Nagas, and I think the older men enjoy the security of life and property which now obtains. It is, however, inevitable that the younger men should regret that the paths of glory are closed for them. The lot of a Naga under us is far from unhappy. As long as he pays his house-tax, takes his infrequent turn at cooly work, and refrains from quarrelling with or looting his neighbours, he lives in absolute peace. The civil police are confined to Kohima station and the cart road, and cannot enter a Naga village or take up a Naga case without special orders. There are no petty native officials to make their lives a burden to them. The simple rules for the administration of justice are suited to the people, their cases are enquired into by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants personally, and their civil and petty criminal cases are decided according to their own customs. As a people they are neither insolent nor cringing, and if they think they are wronged by any order they will say so plainly. It is these qualities of frankness, cheerfulness, hospitality, and obedience which have endeared them to all those officers who have been stationed among them long enough to obtain a knowledge of them and their ways."

Communica-
tions.

The only cart road in the district is the section of the great road which runs from Neghereting on the Brahmaputra to Imphal the capital of Manipur. The opening of the Assam-Bengal Railway has rendered Dimapur to all intents and purposes the terminus of the road, and this is the point at which it enters the district of the Naga Hills. The first $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles run through the Nambar forest to the foot of the hills at Nichuguard. Here it enters the beautiful gorge of the Diphupani, and the next bungalow is situated at Ghaspani (1,527 feet)

10 miles away. From Ghaspani to Piphima (3,018 feet) it is nine miles; from Piphima to Zubza (3,018 feet) nine miles, and from Zubza to Kohima (4,734 feet) $10\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Eleven miles beyond Kohima there is a bungalow at Jak-hama (5,504 feet), and the frontier of the district is reached at Mao Thana, nine miles further on. Four miles beyond Mao the summit of the pass is crossed at an elevation of 5,600 feet above the level of the sea, and from this point the road gradually descends to the fertile valley of Manipur. At each of the halting-places mentioned there is a comfortable and well-appointed staging bungalow in charge of a chaukidar. At present only about 14 miles of the road between Mao Thana and Dimapur are metalled, and the unmetalled portions become almost impassable for wheeled traffic during rainy weather.

The cart road crosses the district from west to east, and a ^{Bridle} path runs right through it from south to ^{paths.} north. Starting from Henima, where there is a rest-house, it is 76 miles to Kohima, rest-houses being maintained at Jossema, Lakema, Pedi, Yekwera and Khonoma on the 12th, 32nd, 42nd, 58rd, and 65th mile respectively from Henima. From Kohima the path runs through Wokha, Mokokchung and Tamlu, till it reaches the plains at Geleki in the extreme north of the district. The following is a list of the inspection bungalows situated along this road; the figure in brackets indicates the distance in miles of each from Kohima: Nerhama (18), Chichama (21), Themokidima (84), Kotsoma ($42\frac{1}{2}$), Wokha (52), Koio (60), Nungtang (71), Nankam (81), Mokokchung (91), Mongsemdi (106), Santong (119), Merangkhang (127), Tamlu (135), and Geleki ($151\frac{3}{4}$). Another bridle path goes

from Kohima eastwards to Cheswejuma ($28\frac{1}{2}$ miles) and is continued from that village for another 85 miles to Shitzu in the Sema country, where it joins the bridle path just described. The following inspection bungalows are maintained along this road; the figure in brackets represents the distance in miles of each from Kohima : Cheswejuma ($23\frac{1}{2}$), Satazuma ($35\frac{1}{4}$), Zulhami ($43\frac{1}{2}$) Kilomi ($52\frac{1}{4}$), Satakha ($65\frac{3}{4}$), Ghukia ($74\frac{1}{4}$), Emilomi ($82\frac{3}{4}$), Auchakalimi ($92\frac{3}{4}$), and Lumhami ($101\frac{3}{4}$). From Wokha a path leads to the plains at Ghiladhari Jan. The total distance is $44\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and there are inspection bungalows at Yekum ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Sonigaon ($19\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Bhandari ($33\frac{1}{4}$ miles), and Goronga Jan ($45\frac{3}{4}$ miles) from Wokha. There is also a bridle path from Mokokchung to Charali in the Jorhat subdivision. The total distance is $47\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and there are inspection bungalows at Chuntia (8 miles), Cholemsen (20 miles), Lakhu ($31\frac{1}{2}$ miles), and Charali (48 miles) from Mokokchung.

**Post and
Telegraph.**

In 1904, there were post offices in the district at Kohima, Impur, Mokokchung, Nichuguard and Wokha. The office at Kohima is a combined post and telegraph office. Ninety-five thousand letters and post-cards were delivered from these offices in 1903-04. Eighty-three savings bank accounts were open in that year for a total value of Rs. 13,000. The mail is brought from Calcutta by the Assam-Bengal Railway to Manipur road station, and is carried thence along the Dimapur-Manipur cart road by runners past Nichuguard to Kohima and thence through Mao to Manipur. There are no post offices between Nichuguard and Kohima, but the traveller can post and receive letters from an "open bag" carried by

the runners. Mails are also carried from the Sibsagar district past Mokokchung to Impur, and from Kohima to Wokha. The open bag system is in force along the whole of the Dimapur-Manipur road. The time at present taken in transit is twelve hours from Dimapur to Kohima, and five hours from Kohima to Mao.

There is not much trade amongst the Nagas except ^{Trade.} in beads and shells. Each household produces practically all that it consumes, and there is no surplus for disposal. Some villages, however, make a speciality of pottery, others of spear heads, others of earthen pots or leaf waterproofs; cattle are reared for market in one place, dogs in another. Most of the business is transacted on a cash basis, and there is very little barter. The principal trading communities are Khonoma, Jotsoma, and Mozema, and men from these villages will go as far afield as Bombay, Calcutta, and Rangoon. A few years ago large profits were made by carrying beads through Manipur to Burma, where they sold for four or five times the amount that they had cost. The Burmese market is, however, getting overstocked, and prices are no longer what they were. There are no such things as village markets, and hardly any shops except in Kohima Bazar, and here and there along the cart road. There are altogether eighteen shops in Kohima, thirteen of which are kept by Marwari merchants, while one is a grocery and general store for the use of Europeans. The Marwaris deal in salt, oil, cloths, grain, umbrellas, thread, and the other articles which are usually to be found in a *kaiya's* shop; but the bulk of their customers are foreigners, and the Nagas only

come to them for salt, thread, and the brass wire from which they make their ornaments. The trade from Manipur passes along the cart road through the district, but, apart from this and the cotton of the Lhotas, there are very few goods exported from the hills. Though honest in their dealings with their fellow-villagers, the Nagas are ready enough to take advantage of the stranger. The Naga cotton is generally watered on the way to Golaghat, and Mr. Damant reported that, as far back as 1878, the Angamis tried to pass off silvered two-pice pieces as rupees, and to sell powdered charcoal as gunpowder to the less sophisticated villagers.

CHAPTER VI.

ADMINISTRATION.

Revenue—Excise—Public Works—Government—Criminal and civil justice
—The Garrison—Civil Police—Jail—Education—Medical.

THE total revenue of the district is extremely small, **Revenue.** and the great bulk of it is derived from the house-tax, which is assessed in lieu of land revenue. Angamis pay Rs. 3 per house, other natives of the district Rs. 2, and foreigners Rs. 5. This tax is collected by the village headmen, who generally receive a commission of $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent for their trouble; but so democratic are the Nagas that the villagers often compel them—to refund their commission as a rebate to the assesseees. The receipts on account of income-tax are inconsiderable, and a large part of them are derived from the salaries paid to Government servants. Only one Naga was assessed in 1908-04. Details for the various heads of revenue will be found in Table VI. The Registration Act is not in force in the Naga Hills. Nagas are not required to pay court-fees in criminal cases, though in civil disputes the ordinary fees are levied from Angamis. Foreigners pay the usual fees both in criminal

and civil cases. The revenue raised under this head is very small.

Excise. The excise revenue of the district is very small. There are one opium shop, one ganja shop, and one country spirit shop at Kohima for the use of foreigners, but the Nagas do not take opium or ganja, and seldom care to waste their money on country spirit. The quantity of opium and ganja consumed and the receipts under each head of excise will be found in Table VIII. The Nagas are, however, great drinkers of rice beer, of which there are two brands, *zu* and *kezu*.

Both kinds are made from millet and job's-tears as well as from rice. *Zu* is a very nourishing and not unpalatable liquor which can be taken in large quantities without bad effects, but *kezu* is much stronger and comparatively soon brings on intoxication. A kind of gruel, called by foreigners *sakha modhu*, can, however, be prepared from *kezu* and is much in favour in the Ao and Sema country.

Public Works. All the bridle paths in the district with the inspection bungalows along them have, since 1908, been in charge of the Deputy Commissioner, with the exception of the short length from Kohima to Khonoma. Each village is held responsible for the section of the path that passes through its land. The villagers are required to clear the jungle twice a year and to dress the surface once, to clear all drains, and to remove all trees, stones, and earth falling on the road. For this they are paid at an average rate of about Rs. 30 per mile. The public buildings at Tessima, Wokha, and Mokokchung are also under the charge of the Deputy Commissioner,

with the exception of those occupied by the military police, which are maintained by the Commandant of the battalion. The Executive Engineer stationed at Kohima is in charge of the more important public works in the Naga Hills and Manipur. He is usually assisted by an Assistant Engineer and a staff of five upper and five lower subordinates. The principal work in charge of the department is the great Dimapur-Manipur mountain cart road to which reference has been already made in the section on communications. None of the public buildings in Kohima are of any size or importance. They were erected at a time when the cost of all building materials was very heavy, and to a great extent are made of corrugated iron.

For administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions—Kohima and Mokokchung. The Deputy Commissioner is stationed at Kohima, and is allowed one assistant, who is generally a European. Mokokchung is usually entrusted to an Assistant Superintendent of Police. The duties of the Deputy Commissioner have been, and still are, mainly of a political character.

The High Court of Fort William in Calcutta has no jurisdiction in the district, except on its criminal sides, over European British subjects: the Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure are not in force, and the Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentences of death and imprisonment up to the maximum amount provided for the offence. The death penalty and sentences of seven years' imprisonment or more require, however, the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner. Litigants may appeal to the Deputy

Government.

Criminal and Civil Justice.

Commissioner from the decision of his assistant within sixteen days. No appeal lies as a matter of right from sentences of less than three years' imprisonment passed by the Deputy Commissioner, but all sentences in excess of that limit are appealable to the Chief Commissioner.

From Table V. it will be seen that there is not much litigation in the district. Assaults and thefts are the offences which are most common, but the old spirit of savagery occasionally breaks out, and the disputing parties decide to settle their quarrels by a stand-up fight. Lives are not unfrequently lost in these riots, but homicides of this character are far less objectionable than the murders which are still occasionally committed from the simple lust of killing. In 1896, a Garo chaukidar, his wife a Nagini, their baby, and another Naga were murdered within fifteen miles of Kohima, from the sheer joy of slaughter; and head-taking is still in full swing on the eastern side of the Dikho. In 1900, when the Deputy Commissioner was touring in these hills he was informed that the village of Yajim had recently raided Kamahu, and had taken sixty heads, most of which had belonged to defenceless women and children. The gallant head-hunter avoids as far as possible all risk of opposition, and much prefers to take the head of an unarmed child to killing a full-grown man in open combat.

The rules provide for the trial of petty cases by the village elders, but most of the Naga villages are very democratic in their institutions, and there are few people of sufficient weight and influence to be able to enforce obedience from an unsuccessful litigant. A Naga trial

is rather a curious spectacle. The two parties stand before the seat of justice, separated by one or more interpreters, with whom they engage in the most animated converse. The proceedings are generally of a very friendly nature, and if one of the parties can be induced to swear to anything, the other side are generally prepared to accept the statement sworn to as correct. The administration of the oath is, however, a very solemn business. The juror unties the little tag of hair at the back of his head, and the spectators all take care to see that his cloth is worn the right side up and his shoulder bare, as the neglect of these formalities would render it possible for him to indulge in perjury with impunity. The juror states his case at length and swears that this statement is correct, praying that, if he lies, both he and all his family may come to a speedy and a violent end. The by-standers listen with the greatest of attention, and are quick to detect and object to any variation in the form of oath which custom has prescribed. Once the oath has been duly sworn the other party departs completely satisfied. At first sight it seems strange that such cases should not be settled out of court, but it is said that if the dispute is decided in the village, there is risk of the parties coming to blows; and with people whose natural instincts are of so bloodthirsty a character, blows soon develop into murderous affrays. The case, too, if decided in cutcherry, receives the sanction of Government, the only authority for which the Nagas have very much respect, and the order passed forms part of a permanent record with regard to which there is no room for

dispute. Civil litigation is, of course, not heavy, and in 1903, only 195 civil suits were filed. One suit was valued at nearly Rs. 14,000, but the average value of the remainder was only Rs. 75.

The Garrison.

The garrison of the district consists of two companies of a Native Infantry regiment stationed at Kohima, and a battalion of military police, which has a strength of 14 officers and 657 non-commissioned officers and men. The battalion is armed with Martini Henry rifles, Mark IV, kukris, and bayonets. The headquarters of the battalion are at Kohima, and its strength is not dissipated over many outposts. At the extreme west of the district Henima is held by a native officer and 25 rifles. A native officer and 25 men are stationed on the top of the hill on which the turbulent village of Khonoma is built, eleven miles by road from Kohima. At the headquarters of the Mokokchung subdivision there are two native officers and 107 rifles, and a native officer and 50 men at Tamlu in the extreme east of the district. The battalion served with distinction in the Naga Hills expedition of 1879-80, the disturbances in Manipur in 1891, and the Abor expedition of 1894.

Civil Police.

The civil police consists of 29 head constables and men, under a sub-inspector. There is a police station at Kohima, with outposts along the cart road at Nichuguard, Piphima, Zubza, Birreru, and Viswema. The civil police are chiefly concerned with the supervision of the traffic on the cart road, and are not allowed to enter a Naga village or take up a Naga case except under special orders from the Deputy Commissioner.

Jail.

The only jail in the district is situated at Kohima.

It consists of a few small buildings with roof and walls of corrugated iron surrounded by a bamboo palisade. It contains accommodation for twenty-four convicts, and ten sick and under-trial prisoners. Convicts sentenced to hard labour are employed in the garden or on the station roads, or at the oil mill.

Education has as yet made little progress in the hills. Education. There is a middle English school at Kohima which, in 1908-04, had a daily average attendance of seventy-seven boys, but not more than nine or ten were the sons of natives of the district. On March 31st, 1904, there were six lower primary schools maintained by Government, at Mokokchung, Wokha, Henima, Khonoma, Jakhama, and Cheswejuma, which had altogether a daily average attendance of one hundred and ten pupils, and sixteen Mission schools* which receive grants-in-aid from Government. There are also two training schools at Kohima and Impur. Arrangements have recently been made to teach the Angamis and Aos to read and write their own language in the English character, as the Naga has no written character of its own. This marks a great advance on the former system under which boys were taught to read and write in Assamese, but it is at present subject to the drawback that there are very few printed books in Ao or Angami. Naga boys have accordingly to be taught to read from the Gospel according to St. John, or the Acts of the Apostles, which must be rather strong meat for these wild and savage babes.

* Situated at Mohung, Yagong, Siramen, Wamaken, Myrang Kong Akoia, Asangma, Waramung, Chilemsen, Janki, Mangmatong, Namkam, Ungma, Lungsa Lungpa, and Lungzang.

There were altogether 571 boys and 76 girls at school in 1903-04, or 4 per cent. of the children of school-going age, but the Nagas have not yet learned the advantages of education, and a certain amount of judicious pressure is required to induce them to send their children to be taught.

Medical.

The district is in the charge of a Civil Surgeon, and contains two hospitals, situated at Kohima (ten beds), and Wokha (four beds), and one dispensary at Mokokchung. Vital statistics are only recorded at Kohima, so that there is no detailed information available with regard to the mortuary statistics of the people. Malarial fever and lung affections are probably responsible for a considerable proportion of the total casualties, and epidemics of measles and influenza occasionally claim a long tale of victims. Dysentery and cholera sometimes appear amongst the lower villages, but cholera is fortunately comparatively rare. The hillmen have a wholesome dread of infection, and do not scruple to evacuate a village if the circumstances are sufficiently serious to warrant such a measure. The following description of the conduct of the Samaguting Nagas when confronted by a single case of small-pox is taken from a report by Mr. Carnegie in 1877* :—

The disease was treated as a personal enemy, and the village abandoned as would have been done before the coming of an invader too powerful to resist. The men were all fully armed, and the women and children were surrounded, and then all started forth at best pace; they kept away a month, and then returned with the same precautions as when leaving, approaching very cautiously with shields

* No. 59, dated 1st May, 1877.

well to the front, and peeping round every corner before a further advance until gradually the whole village was occupied.

When they fairly satisfied themselves that no one but the Kuki had been ill, they were rather ashamed of running away; but it was not until some time after when they saw him going about, very little the worse in appearance, that the idea that he had been burnt alive was abandoned. Before, nothing would persuade them this had not been done, it being looked upon as merely a wise precautionary measure for which we deserved credit.

Their fears are apparently still strong, but they take the more sensible precaution of submitting to the process of vaccination. During the five years ending with 1902-03, seventy-six per mille of the population were successfully vaccinated every year; a proportion that was higher than that reported from any district in the Province except the Garo Hills. Nothing could well exceed the dirt of the Naga villages and houses, and were it not for the very sanitary character of the site, they could hardly fail to become veritable hot-beds of disease. But they are generally built on the very summits of the hills, and there are no fruit trees or bamboo jungle to deprive them of the purifying influences of the sun and air. The people, too, have the sense to wrap up warmly in the cold weather, a sensible precaution which saves them no doubt from many chills. In the absence of all statistics it is difficult to say whether the death rate is high or not. The Nagas do not increase rapidly in numbers, but this may possibly be due more to a low birth-rate than to a high mortality.

Venereal diseases are not very prevalent amongst the Angamis, but are unfortunately common in the Ao country, and their dissemination is facilitated by the

customs of the people. In 1903, there were more cases of primary and secondary syphilis treated at the Kohima and Mokokchung dispensaries than at any other two dispensaries in the Province. In 1904 the proportion of the population treated in the district dispensaries for syphilis was ten times greater than the proportion in the Province as a whole.



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APPENDIX A.—Flora.

The following account of the flora of the Naga Hills has been received from the Superintendent of the Royal Botanical Gardens, Calcutta:—

“The Flora of the Naga Hills closely resembles that of Sikkim up to the same altitude. Below 2,000 feet the low-level jungle consists mostly of plants belonging to such genera as *Pterospermum*, *Columbia*, *Gynandropsis*, *Clansena*, *Erythralium*, *Lepionurus*, *Cardiopteris*, *Lophopetalum*, *Vitis*, *Leea*, *Uraria*, *Alysicarpus*, *Desmodium*, *Pac*, *Dalbergia*, *Bauhinia*, *Sonerila*, *Ammannia*, *Modecca*, *Trichosanthes*, *Momordica*, *Cucumis*, *Melothria*, *Tpladiantha*, *Ggnostemma*, *Begonia*, *Aralia*, *Brassidopsis*, *Heydyotis*, *Polyura*, *Psychotria*, *Paederia*, *Ardisia*, *Pentasacine*, *Cynanchum*, *Mitreola*, *Argyrea*, *Porana*, *Solanum*, *Lindenbergia*, *Lysionotus*, *Didymocarpus*, *Stauranthera*, *Thunbergia*, *Barleria*, *Eranthemum*, *Orthosiphon*, *Chloranthus*, *Hedychiium*, *Hitchenia*, *Zingiber*, *Tacca*, *Dracaena*, *Commelinaceæ*, *Adiantum*, *Pteris*, *Nephrodium*, *Aerostichum*. The slopes from 2,000 feet to about 5,000 feet are chiefly under rice cultivation. From 5,000 feet to about 8,000 feet the vegetation is composed for the most part of plants belonging to the genera, *Clematis*, *Thalictrum*, *Michelia*, *Stephania*, *Berberis*, *Viola*, *Polygala*, *Cuenbalus*, *Hypericum*, *Sauruja*, *Eurya*, *Schima*, *Geranium*, *Toddalia*, *Euonymus*, *Gonania*, *Acer*, *Prunus*, *Spiraea*, *Rubus*, *Pyrus*, *Photinia*, *Sedum*, *Circaea*, *Passiflora*, *Hydrocotyle*, *Sanicula*, *Bupleurum*, *Pimpinella*, *Heptapleurum*, *Viburnum*, *Ophiorrhiza*, *Anaphalis*, *Senecio*, *Cuicus*, *Lactuca*, *Campanula*, *Vaccinium*, *Lysimachia*, *Crawfrudia*, *Swertia*, *Scrophularia*, *Pedicularis*, *Elsholtzia*, *Polygonum*, *Litsaea*, *Lindera*, *Pilea*, *Elatostemma*, *Betula*, *Abrus*, *Quercus*, *Pinus*, *Smilax*, *Carex*, *Arundo*, *Arundinella*, *Brachypodium*, *Hymenophyllum*, *Davallia*, *Pteris*, *Aspidium*, *Polypodium*, *Osmunda*, *Equisetum*. Above 8,000 feet occur such plants as *Aconitum*, *Skimmia*, *Ilex*, *Acer*, *Spiraea*, *Rubus*, *Cotoneaster*, *Sedum*, *Epilobium*, *Vicatia*, *Pimpinella*, *Gamblea*, *Senecio*, *Ainsliaea*, *Cyananthus*, *Vaccinium*, *Gaultheria*, *Rhododendron*, *Pedicularis*, *Quercus*, *Cephalotaxus*, *Juncus*, *Deycuazia*, *Lomaria*, *Polypodium*.”

For further information see (1) Mr. C. B. Clarke's Botanical observations made in a journey to the Naga Hills, Journal of the Linnean Society, Volume XXII, page 128, and (2) a paper on the Plants of Kohima and Manipur by the same author in the Journal of the Linnean Society, Volume XXV, page 1.

TABLE I.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shewn below the name of each station.

MONTHS.				AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.		
				Kohima (22 years.)	Wokha (16 years.)	Mokok- chung (11 years.)
January	...	...	...	0.58	1.07	0.81
February	...	...	...	1.15	1.85	2.00
March	...	...	...	2.59	3.69	4.73
April	...	...	...	3.96	7.76	9.31
May	...	...	...	6.79	9.80	10.55
June	...	...	...	13.86	17.49	17.09
July	...	...	...	16.69	21.36	19.70
August	...	...	...	14.95	20.79	17.02
September	...	...	...	10.04	12.47	8.92
October	...	...	...	3.71	4.90	4.13
November	...	...	...	1.10	1.27	0.97
December	...	...	...	0.43	0.38	0.65
Total of year				75.85	102.88	95.88

TABLE II.
General Statistics of Population.

PARTICULARS.				Persons.	Males.	Females.
Population—						
1901	...	...	✓	102,402	51,856	50,746
1891	...	...	...	98,637	49,084	47,553
1881	...	...	...	95,870	48,446	47,124
1872	...	...	...	71,021	35,510	35,511
Variations—						
1891—1901	..	...	...	+ 5,765	+ 2,572	+ 3,193
1881—1891	...	...	...	+ 1,067	+ 638	+ 429
1872—1881	...	...	...	+ 24,549	+ 12,936	11,613
1901.						
Religion—						
Hindus	...	...	...	3,351	2,407	944
Muhammadans	...	...	...	142	108	36
Animistic	...	...	...	97,948	48,597	49,351
Total Christians	...	...	...	601	297	304
Baptists	...	...	...	563	272	291
Other Religions	...	...	...	360	249	111
Civil condition—						
Unmarried	...	...	...	46,327	25,202	21,125
Married	...	...	...	44,195	22,504	21,691
Widowed	...	...	...	11,880	8,950	7,930
Literacy—						
Literate in Bengali	...	...	...	210	178	32
Literate in English	...	...	...	153	143	10
Illiterate	...	...	...	101,022	50,348	50,674
Languages spoken—						
Angami	...	...	...	27,855	13,970	13,885
Ao Chungli or Zungi	...	...	...	17,623	8,376	9,247
Ao Mongsen	...	...	...	10,512	5,018	5,494
Lhota	...	...	...	16,982	8,933	8,029
Kachoha Naga	...	...	...	6,296	3,255	3,041
Sema	...	...	...	5,880	2,622	3,208

TABLE III.

Birth-place, Race, Caste and Occupation.

PARTICULARS.				Persons.	Males.	Females.
Birth-place—						
Born in district	...	...	...	96,835	48,175	48,160
„ other parts of Province	...	...	...	3,852	1,750	2,102
„ Bengal	...	...	...	394	292	102
„ United Provinces	...	...	...	201	159	42
„ Nepal	...	...	...	1,367	1,059	308
„ Elsewhere	...	...	...	253	221	32
Race and Caste—						
European (a)	...	...	...	22	18	4
Naga (Angami)	...	...	...	27,506	14,168	13,338
Naga (Ao)	...	...	...	26,753	12,963	13,790
Naga (Kachcha)	...	...	...	6,559	3,643	2,916
Naga (Lhota)	...	...	...	19,257	9,024	10,233
Naga (Bengma)	...	...	...	4,170	2,116	2,054
Naga (Sema)	...	...	...	4,668	2,457	2,211
Occupation—						
Workers	...	...	...	69,240	35,046	34,194
Dependents	...	...	...	33,162	...	...
Total Supported—						
Jhum Cultivators	...	...	...	92,327	45,835	46,492

(a) Includes allied races.

TABLE IV.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

				KOHIMA.		
				Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.
1890	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	10	4	5
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	8	4½	5
1900	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	13	4½	5½
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	4½	6
1901	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	5½	7
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	14	6	8
1902	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	16	7	10
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	14	6	10
1903	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	7	10
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	11½	7½	9
1904	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	16	8	8
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	12½	6	6
1905	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	18	8	8
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1906	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1907	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1908	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1909	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1910	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1911	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...
1912	{ 2nd week of February	...	...	...	...	...
	{ 2nd week of August	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE V.
Statistics of Criminal and Civil Justice.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902		1903		1904		1905		1906		1907		1908		1909		1910		1911		1912	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.																						
NUMBER OF CASES.																						
(I). Rioting or unlawful assembly. Sec. 143-153, 157, 158 & 159 ...	1	...	3	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
(II). Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c. ...	4	4	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
(III). Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide. Sec. 302-304, 307, 308 & 396	...	...	2	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
(IV). Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon. Sec. 324-326, 329, 331, 333 & 335 ...	4	2	2	2	4	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
(V). Serious criminal force, Sec. 353, 354, 356 & 357 ...	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	
Carried over ...	9	6	8	5	7	4																

Statistics of Criminal and Civil Justice.—contd.

HEADS OF CRIME.	1902		1903		1904		1905		1906		1907		1908		1909		1910		1911		1912	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	
Brought forward ...	9	6	8	5	7	4																
(VI). Other serious offences against the person	1	1	...	...	1	1																
(VII). Dacoity. Sec. 395, 397 & 398 ...	...	...	...	...	...	...																
(VIII). Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning, or maiming any animal.	...	...	...	...	3	2																
Sec. 370, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430-433 & 435-440	...	...	...	...	...	...																
(IX). House-breaking and serious house trespass. Sec. 449-452, 454, 455 & 457-460 ...	3	2	8	2	1	...																
(X). Wrongful restraint and confinement. Sec. 341-344 ...	...	...	...	...	1	1																
(XI). Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property ...	...	...	...	...	1	1																
(XII). Theft. Sec. 379 & 382 ...	28	11	29	12	32	18																

(XIII). Receiving stolen property. Sec. 411 & 414	2	1	4	2	1	1
(XIV). Larking and criminal house trespass. Sec. 453, 455, 447 & 448	..	..	1	1	2	1
(XV). Other minor offences against property	7	5	2	2	1	...
Total ..	50	26	52	24	50	29
CIVIL JUSTICE.						
Suits for money and moveables ..	221		194			106
Title and other suits	...		...			...
Rent suits	...		...			...
Total ..	221		194			106

TABLE VI.
Finance.—Receipts.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1890-91	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue (ordinary) ...	1,557	10	10	10	10								
" " (miscellaneous)	48,428	59,708	60,558	59,944	64,650								
Judicial stamps ...	826	1,376	1,399	2,289	2,439								
Non-Judicial stamps ...	239	282	814	310	361								
Opium ...	6,916	2,263	2,178	2,208	3,806								
Country spirits ...	750	556	420	1,163	1,142								
Ganja ...	517	441	706	749	687								
Other heads of Excise ...	263	880	543	568	769								
Assessed taxes ...	2,308	2,834	2,349	2,135	2,176								
No. of assesses per 1,000 ...	1	1	1	...	...								
Total ...	61,804	68,350	68,477	69,366	75,540								

TABLE VII.
Miscellaneous Land Revenue.—Receipts.

PARTICULARS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
KOHIMA SUBDIVISION.												
House tax	...	Rs. 40,888	Rs. 41,443	Rs. 42,112	Rs. 33,893							
Total revenue	...	Rs. 41,610	Rs. 42,038	Rs. 42,112	Rs. 34,837							
MOKOKCHUNG SUBDIVISION.												
House tax	...	Rs. 18,096	Rs. 18,520	Rs. 17,832	Rs. 23,820							
Total revenue	...	Rs. 18,098	Rs. 18,520	Rs. 17,832	Rs. 29,813							
TOTAL DISTRICT.												
House tax	...	Rs. 58,984	Rs. 59,963	Rs. 59,944	Rs. 57,713							
Other heads	...	Rs. 724	Rs. 595	...	Rs. 6,937*							
Total revenue	...	Rs. 59,708	Rs. 60,558	Rs. 59,944	Rs. 64,650							

* Includes revenue from elephant mahals and royalty on elephants (Rs. 5,600).

TABLE VIII.
Excise.

PRINCIPAL HEADS.	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
No. of opium shops ...	1	1	1	1								
Amount paid for licenses	Rs. 1,095	Rs. 810	Rs. 1,011	Rs. 1,311								
Opium issued	m. s. ch. 1 1 0 1 8 0 1 2 0 1 30 0	m. s. ch. 1 1 0 1 8 0 1 2 0 1 30 0	m. s. ch. 1 1 0 1 8 0 1 2 0 1 30 0	m. s. ch. 1 1 0 1 8 0 1 2 0 1 30 0								
Duty on opium sold	Rs. 1,168	Rs. 1,368	Rs. 1,197	Rs. 1,995								
No. of ganja shops ...	1	1	1	1								
Amount paid for licenses	Rs. 306	Rs. 364	Rs. 380	Rs. 354								
Amount of ganja issued	m. s. ch. 0 16 0 0 88 0 1 1 0 0 85 0	m. s. ch. 0 16 0 0 88 0 1 1 0 0 85 0	m. s. ch. 0 16 0 0 88 0 1 1 0 0 85 0	m. s. ch. 0 16 0 0 88 0 1 1 0 0 85 0								
Duty on ganja sold	Rs. 135	Rs. 342	Rs. 369	Rs. 333								
No. of country spirit shops	1	1	1	1								
Amount paid for licenses	Rs. 556	Rs. 420	Rs. 1,163	Rs. 1,142								
Other heads of Excise revenue	880	543	568	769								

TABLE IX.
The Strength of the Police Force.

PARTICULARS.				1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.					
<i>Supervising Staff.</i>					
District and Assistant Superintendents				...	1
Inspectors				...	...
SUBORDINATE STAFF.					
Sub-Inspectors				1	1
Head Constables				2	3
Constables				11	26
MILITARY POLICE.					
Officers				71*	72
Men				569*	598
Total expenditure				Rs. 1,62,084	1,94,214

In 1881 there were only Frontier police and no Civil police.

* Actual strength.

TABLE X.
Police Station and Outposts.

NAMES OF POLICE STATION AND OUTPOST.				SANCTIONED STRENGTH IN 1904.			
				Sub- Inspectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
Kohima P. S.	...	...	...	1	2	16	19
Niehuguard O. P.	...	...	...	...	1	10	11
Piphima Road Post	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Vireru Road Post	...	...	...	...	...	2	2
Viswema Road Post	...	...	...	...	...	3	3
Zubza Road Post	...	...	...	...	...	3	3

TABLE XI.

Outposts held by the Naga Hills military police battalion.

NAME.	Distance from Headquarters.	Strength.	
		Officers.	Men.
Tamlu	136 miles	1	50
Mokokohung	53 "	1	100
Henima	76 "	1	25
Khonoma	11 "	1	25
Tessima	7 "	...	8

TABLE XII.

Kohima Subsidiary Jail.

	1891	1901
Average daily population { Male	17	20
Female	...	...
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000 ...	...	...
	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on jail maintenance ...	2,693	1,013
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners) ...	68	22
Profits on jail manufacture ...	...	1,343
Earnings per prisoner†	...	71

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XIII.

Educational Finance.

PARTICULARS.	No. of institutions.	Expenditure on institutions maintained or aided by public funds in 1900-01 from				Expenditure per scholar.
		Provincial Revenues.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. As. P.
Training and Special School	1	28	...	957	985	25 4 1
Middle English Schools ...	1	1,649	207	...	1,856	23 11 4
Lower Primary School ...	16	1,620	...	...	1,620	8 2 3
Total	18	3,297	207	957	4,461	14 1 10

TABLE XIV.
Education

	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
MIDDLE ENGLISH SCHOOLS.—												
Number... ..	1	1	1									
" of boys reading in } middle school classes	6	5	6									
" of boys reading in } primary classes	73	80	81									
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS.—												
Number... ..	16	16	22									
" of boys reading in } three upper classes	154 (a)	180 (a)	{ 78									
" of boys reading in } lower classes			{ 53									
FEMALE EDUCATION—												
Number of pupils in—												
Middle English Schools	5	2	1									
" Vernacular Schools	...	...	...									
Upper Primary Schools	...	...	...									
Lower Primary Schools	46	41	27									

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XV.
Medical.

PARTICULARS.	KOHIMA SUBDIVISION.			MOKOCHUNG SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	1881.	1891.	1901.	1891.	1901.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries ...	1	3	2	1	1	1	4	3
Daily average number of in-door patients	16.18	7.34	13.60	...	...	16.18	7.34	13.60
" " out-door "	30.86	15.20	36.87	5.76	23.18	30.86	20.98	60.05
Cases treated ...	1,081	4,275	10,651	1,274	5,859	1,081	5,549	16,510
Operations performed ...	11	121	119	27	42	11	148	161
Total Income ...	Rs. 3,024	Rs. 4,256	Rs. 4,009	Rs. 304	Rs. 699	Rs. 3,024	Rs. 4,560	Rs. 4,708
Income from Government ...	2,959	3,724	3,556	804	699	2,959	4,028	4,255
Subscriptions ...	...	494	249	...	...	...	434	249
Total expenditure ...	3,024	4,201	3,987	304	699	3,024	4,505	4,686
Expenditure on Establishment ...	1,358	2,004	1,776	...	384	1,358	2,004	2,110
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated.	Not available					(a) 2	19	128
Cost per case ...	...	Do.				...	Rs. A. P. 0-3-11	Rs. A. P. 0-1-9

(a) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE XVI.
Dispensaries.

NAMES OF DISPENSARIES.	1900		1901		1902		1903		1904		1905	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
Kohima ...	Ra. 3,807	6,519	Ra. 3,512	6,788	Ra. 4,341	7,444	Ra. 3,917	11,480	Ra. 3,772	10,148	Ra.	
Mokokchung ...	420	4,648	699	5,359	952	4,600	852	5,375	662	5,870		
Wokha ...	354	3,506	474	3,918	520	6,116	617	5,043	615	4,343		

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NAMES OF DISPENSARIES.	1906		1907		1908		1909		1910		1911		1912	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
Kohima ...	Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.		Ra.	
Mokokchung ...														
Wokha ...														

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MANIPUR.

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—Mountain system—Rivers—Lakes and Jhils—
General appearance of the valley—Climate and rainfall—Earth-
quakes—Wild animals.

THE Native State of Manipur is situated between ^{Area and boundaries.} 28° 50' and 25° 41' N. and 93° 2' and 94° 47' E. and covers an area of 8,456 square miles. On the north it is bounded by the British district of the Naga Hills, on the west by Cachar, on the south by the Lushai Hills and Burma, and on the east by Burma.

The greater part of the State consists of ranges of hills whose general trend is north and south. Towards the east the direction of the upthrust is not so well defined, and the country lying between Manipur and the Kubo Valley consists of a tumbled mass of hills, with a general tendency to run east and west. In the centre of the State is the valley of Manipur, which is about 80 miles in length and 20 in breadth. Lines of low hills, which crop up here and there above the alluvium, suggest that the formation of the valley was originally much the same as that of the surrounding hills, and

that it consisted of two or more chains of mountains running north and south, with deep valleys in between. These ranges were, however, considerably lower than those that now surround them. It has generally been thought by most observers that the Manipur Valley was originally a lake. This theory was, however, rejected by Mr. R. D. Oldham of the Geological Survey Department, who pointed out that, had it been correct, there would have been the remains of terraces formed by the cutting down of the outlet.*

Mountain
system.

The following list of the hill ranges of Manipur is taken from the *Gazetteer* by Captain Dun. The ranges on the west are—(1) Nunjaibong; (2) Kalanaga; (3) Chakka-Nungba; (4) Kaupum (really only a spur from the Laimatol); (5) Kopru-Laimatol. On the north—(1) The Kunho spurs; (2) Thumion-Mayang-Khang; (3) Laisom; (4) Sirohifara. On the east—(1) Sarameiti or Ching-angauga; (2) Somra; (3) Kassom; (4) Nupitel or Mapethe; (5) Yomadung. On the south—(1) Haobi.

The greatest altitude is attained in the extreme north, where Mao thana is overhung by a peak nearly 10,000 feet above the level of the sea. The hills run, as a rule, in irregular serrated ridges, rising here and there into peaks; but west of the valley assume a more open and rolling character. Between Cachar and Manipur, they are covered with dense evergreen forests and bamboo jungle. In the country to the west pine trees are common; but round the valley itself, and along

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX, Part 4, p. 21.

the Kohima road there is comparatively little tree growth, and the sides of the hills are, for the most part, covered with grass. The ranges are, as a rule, composed of soft grey shale, which is very liable to slip when exposed to the action of the rain and air. The slope is fairly easy till near the summit, which is often rocky and precipitous.

The rivers of the valley take their rise in the hills **Rivers.** towards the north. On the east is the Thobal, which rises in the hills not far from Ukrul. West of the Thobal is the Iril, which rises about fifteen miles east of Maram, and, after skirting the town of Imphal, falls, like the Thobal, into the Imphal river. Through the capital itself flow the Imphal and the Nambol. The last-named river falls into the Loktak, from which it emerges under the name of Kortak. This stream eventually joins the Imphal, and another river called Nambol, which rises near Kangjupkul and flows to the west of Imphal and the Loktak. Their united waters, which are known as the Achauba, Imphal, or Manipur river, finally fall into the Kendat and thus into the Chindwin. In the hills these rivers are bright and sparkling streams, flowing along over their rocky beds, but in the valley they assume the disagreeable characteristics often found in the rivers that traverse an alluvial plain. In the cold weather they are shallow muddy streams, creeping along at the bottom of the deep channels which they have cut through the alluvium, but in times of flood they rise to a considerable height and sometimes overtop their banks. In the dry season they are only navigable by canoes, and, though in the rains there is a

considerable depth of water, country boats of a larger size are quite unknown. Attempts were made to introduce them after 1891, but they were not received with favour, and the Manipuris evidently find their small canoes sufficient for the short journeys they perform.

Hill rivers.

In the eastern hills there are numerous small streams which drain into the Yu and thence into the Chindwin. They flow through deep valleys, and are liable to sudden floods which render them difficult to cross, but only one of them, the Maglang, has any depth of water in the winter. The principal rivers in the western hills are the Barak and its tributary the Irang. The Barak rises about ten miles east of Mao thana, and flows a westerly course as far as Kairong, where it crosses the Manipur-Kohima cart-road. Here it takes a bend towards the north, and then turns westward, till it reaches the north-west corner of the State. The river then curves away towards the south, and flows the whole way to Tipaimukh, which till lately was the tri-junction point of Manipur, Cachar and the Lushai Hills, along the eastern side of the last main range of hills which separates Cachar from Manipur. At Tipaimukh the Barak turns sharply to the north, and, as far as Jirighat, flows almost parallel with, though in the opposite direction to, the section of the river that lies between Kalanaga and Tipaimukh. In this portion of its course it forms the boundary between Cachar and Manipur, but at Jirighat it turns again to the west, and, after a tortuous course through the districts of Cachar and Sylhet, falls into the old bed of the Brahmaputra near Bhairab bazar. The principal

tributary of the Barak is the Irang, which rises a little to the west of Kairong, and falls into it about 20 miles north of Tipaimukh. Two other rivers of some importance, crossed by the traveller from Cachar to Manipur, are the Jiri, which for a considerable distance forms the western boundary of the State, and the Makru. None of the other streams that flow along the valleys and carry off the drainage of the slopes on either side are of sufficient size to merit special mention. In the dry season the hill rivers consist, as a rule, of still deep pools linked together by shallow rocky reaches. In the rains they are liable to sudden freshets, and, though there is no very great depth of water in the river, the current is extremely swift and strong. The Barak at Kairong only contains a few inches of water in the cold weather, but, during the rains, carts used sometimes to be detained for several days till the subsidence of the flood.

The Loktak is the largest sheet of water in the Province of Assam, and is said to be eight miles long and five miles wide at the broadest part.* It is a broad, shallow, sheet of water, and is just such a pool as is left in a saucer-like depression when a marsh dries up. Viewed from above, the appearance of the Loktak is distinctly tame, and there is nothing romantic or picturesque in its surroundings. Ordinary water meadows, destitute alike of reeds and trees, gradually merge into a shallow

The Loktak
Lake.

* The size of the Loktak varies considerably according to the season of the year, and the lake is said to be gradually shrinking. The absence of any very reliable maps of Manipur renders it impossible to give its dimensions with accuracy.

mere. On the western side there are the remains of a row of hills, whose bases have evidently been submerged beneath the alluvium, and whose summits now form steep and precipitous islands. The largest of these is called Tanga, and is a place to which criminals used occasionally to be deported in the days of native rule. Here and there on the broad surface of the lake are floating islets, formed from the matted roots of aquatic plants. Some of the larger ones are used as camping places by the fisher folk, who build their huts there, though the island rocks at each step and the water oozes up in each footprint. But, like the margin of the lake, they are destitute of any growth of reeds, and this absence of anything to break the even level of the view deprives the Loktak of any claim to beauty.

Other Jhils.

Dotted about the valley are numerous *jhils* which only differ from the Loktak in point of size and depth. Many of them, in fact, dry up completely in the winter time, or only contain a few pools in the lowest levels. The Lumphel and Tayel *jhils* near Imphal are valuable as grazing grounds. The Waithou Shorien, the Waithou Phoomnaw, the Ekope, Kajipat, and Poomlen *jhils* are sold for considerable sums as fisheries. These, however, are but a few of the most important marshes in the valley, and, during the rainy season, there are probably between sixty and seventy sheets of water, some small, some large, but all alike possessed of the prevailing characteristics.

General appearance of the valley.

The traveller who enters Manipur by the Cachar road obtains a magnificent view of the valley from the summit of the Laimatol hill. For several days his path

has lain across range after range of mountains, covered with forest so dense that it is seldom that he can see as much as a quarter of a mile before him. Suddenly all is changed. The eastern face of the hill, as it slopes before him to the valley, is covered with short grass, and rolling downs take the place of the dense tropical forest that lies concealed on the western side of the ridge. The valley lies before him like a map. At the northern end, some twenty miles away, are the dark-green groves that conceal the town of Imphal. Elsewhere are level rice fields, and land covered with grass, about which are dotted the clumps of trees that mark the villages. These villages are much more scattered than they are in the densely populated portions of Assam. They do not stretch in one long continuous line, but stand out here and there, clear and well defined, and there is many a square mile of land without a trace of human habitation. Low ridges of hills stand up above the alluvium, and sheets of water gleam in the shallow depressions on the plain. To the south, the Loktak sparkles in the sun, and on every side the view is bounded by hills. But, unlike the mountains that shut in the two great valleys of Assam, they are almost destitute of trees, and nowhere in the valley is there that rank growth of vegetation which is so distinguishing a characteristic of the British Province.

Lying as it does at an elevation of 2,600 feet above the level of the sea, the climate of the valley is generally cool and pleasant. No records of temperature are kept, but it is said that at the hottest season of the year the thermometer in the residency seldom rises above 83°

Climate and
Rainfall.

Fahrenheit.* The average rainfall at Imphal is about 70 inches in the year, but it is much more variable than is usual in Assam. In 1896-97, it was 57 inches, while in 1899-1900, it was over 100. The rainfall in the same year at Ukrul, about 85 miles north-east of Imphal and about 6,000 feet above the level of the sea, was only 68 inches. About half the rain falls in the three months June to August, and the spring rains are not so heavy as in many places in Assam. The average rainfall recorded in each month will be found in Table I.

The prevailing winds are from the south and west. Storms and destructive cyclones are far from common, but, at Moirang, a special puja is performed each year with the object of warding off calamities of this kind. The village at this time does a regular Naga *ghenna*, and for five days no one is allowed to enter or leave its precincts.

Earth-
quakes.

On January 10th, 1869, a severe shock of earthquake was felt at Manipur. The Raja's house, which was built of brick, collapsed, killing four persons and wounding several more. The upper story of the residency subsided, the treasury was levelled with the ground, and numerous other buildings wrecked. The ground opened and sand and mud were spouted forth, and the beds of the rivers were choked by the *debris* which fell into them.† The only persons in the State, who were known to have been killed by the earthquake, were the four who were buried in the ruins of the Raja's palace. The

* Colonel Johnstone reports that the highest and lowest shade temperature recorded by him were 92° and 30°.

† Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XIX. Part I, p. 20

great earthquake of June 12th, 1897, was distinctly felt. The ground rocked, trees waved to and fro as though exposed to a storm, and the houses swayed. The actual damage done was, however, insignificant, and, in the opinion of the Political Agent, the shock was not strong enough to injure any well-built building.

The larger kinds of fauna are not nearly so ^{Wild} numerous as in the Brahmaputra Valley, in spite of ^{animals.} the fact that a great portion of the State is very sparsely peopled. Elephants are found, but are by no means common. The bison or mithun (*bos gaurus*) is occasionally seen, but wild buffalo are quite unknown. Of deer there are several varieties: the sambar (*cervus unicolor*), the barasingha (*cervus duvauceli*), the hog deer, (*cervus porcinus*), the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*), and the Manipuri deer or sangnai (*cervus eldi*), which is found not only in Manipur but in Burma, the Malay Peninsula, Cambodia, and Hainan. Stags of the latter variety stand about 45 inches at the shoulder, and are fawn-coloured in summer and of a darker hue in winter; does are a little smaller and of a fairer colour. The horns have an extremely long curved brow-antler, joining the beam in such a manner that the two form one continuous curve at right angles to the pedicel. The beam is unbranched for a considerable distance, generally more than half the length, and curved backwards, then outwards, and lastly forwards; towards the end it bears a number of small points. These deer are no longer common, and are generally to be found in swampy ground.

Leopards are fairly common, and tigers are

occasionally killed. Two varieties of black bear are found in the hills, and in the tops of the highest mountains the serow is occasionally to be seen. Other animals include wild cats, wild pigs, which are fairly common, otters, monkeys, and rats. Rats occasionally do much damage in the hills by consuming all the grain. They are specially voracious in the south, where Manipur adjoins the Lushai country, and in the Lushai Hills they once produced an actual famine. Wild duck of various kinds, and wild geese are extraordinarily plentiful, and the surface of the Loktak is often covered with these birds. Hume's pheasant (*phasianus humiae*) is found in Manipur, in addition to the peacock pheasant (*polyplectrum*) and the ordinary Kalij pheasant. There is excellent snipe shooting, and partridges, wood cock, and jungle fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*) are also to be had. Cobras and other poisonous snakes are rare, but harmless snakes are not uncommon. Large python are found in the moist warm valleys that separate the ranges that lie between Cachar and Manipur.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Early traditions—Reign of Panheiba from 1714 to 1754—Three Rajas in ten years—Jaie Singh reigns intermittently—Marjit and his brothers—Burmese occupation—Continuous anarchy—Gambhir Singh—Nur Singh Regent and then Raja—Chandra Kirti Singh—Thirteen raids and two revolutions in 32 years—Sur Chandra Singh—Murder of the Chief Commissioner in 1891 and subsequent pacification of State—History of Political Agency—Unsatisfactory position of Agent—Turbulence of hill tribes in 1891

THE origin of the Manipuris, as of the other hill tribes on the frontier, must always be a matter of uncertainty. McCulloch reports that, according to the most credible traditions, the valley was originally occupied by several tribes, the principal of which were named, Koomal, Looang, Moirang, and Meithei, all of whom came from different quarters of the compass. The Koomal are said to have been originally the most powerful and after them the Moirang; but ultimately the Meithei subdued them all and formed them into a single people. Tradition says that the Moirangs came from the south, the country of the Kukis and the Chins; the Koomal from the east, where the Tankuls now are found;

Origin of the Manipuris.

and the Meithei and Looang from the hills to the north-west, which are at present occupied by the Kapuis and the Mao Maram Nagas.* McCulloch, with whom Brown agrees, is of opinion that the Manipuris are descended from the tribes inhabiting the hills that surround the valley, and bases his opinion on their own traditions, on philological affinities, and on the fact that the ceremony of ascending the throne is performed in Naga dress, while the *Zimchaw* or 'great house,' the original residence of the hill chief, is built in Naga fashion. The Manipuris, it should be said, deny that the costume in question is in any way peculiar to the Nagas, and a small section of them lay claim to a western and Hindu descent.

Early traditions of Manipur.

According to McCulloch (p. 5) the records of Manipur contain a long list of chiefs, a list of names and of very little more. Pemberton reports that Manipur was visited by Samlongpha, brother of the king of Pong, towards the close of the eighth century A.D.† He had been on a raiding expedition through Cachar and Tippera, and descended into the valley near Moirang, a village on the western shore of the Loktak lake. He ordered the people of Moirang to make a yearly offering to the local gods, and visited the Meitheis, who were not assessed to tribute, but were ordered to dress more decently and to chew pan in place of the pieces of dried fish

* Account of the Valley of Manipur and of the Hill Tribes, by Major McCulloch, Political Agent at Manipur, p. 4.

† Report on the North-East Frontier, page 109. According to Pemberton this Samlongpha was the first Ahom or Shan chief to invade Assam. This invasion is, however, generally assigned to the 13th century, A.D.

they had formerly affected. For several centuries after the visit of this Shan prince nothing of interest is recorded in the annals of Manipur. The Meithei tribe increased in dignity and importance, and in 1475, the King of Pong proposed to marry a daughter of the Meithei chief. On her way to Pong she was carried off by the Raja of Khumbat, but he was promptly attacked and conquered by the combined forces of Pong and Manipur. His territories were made over to the Meithei chief, and the valley was visited by the Pong king who directed that the old form of Naga house should be abandoned and the so-called "long lived house" should be adopted in its stead. He also presented the Raja with a golden *pandhan*, a silver mounted dao, and a litter, which, with a sacred spear, were for many years the insignia of royalty. The last of these articles, the golden *pandhan*, disappeared in 1850, when it was carried off by Raja Debendro Singh.

The modern history of Manipur may be said to date from 1714, when Panheiba, or Gharib Nawaz, accidentally shot his adopted father and thereby cleared his way to the throne. According to one account, Panheiba was a Naga boy who had been adopted by the Raja. Others say that he was the Raja's son by one of his inferior wives. It was the custom at that time to kill all sons born to the Raja by any of his minor wives. This in itself is a sufficiently unpleasant practice, but a perusal of the history of Manipur shows that amongst such a cruel and treacherous people there was much to be said in favour of the custom. Panheiba's mother succeeded in concealing her young infant, and smuggled him away into the hills. The principal Rani was not

Panheiba or
Gharib
Nawaz 1714
—1754, A.D.

blessed with a son, and the Raja having heard of the existence of Panheiba adopted him and declared him to be his heir.

Gharib Nawaz occupied the throne for forty years, and under his guidance Manipur appears to have attained to a position of considerable power and dignity. Several expeditions were led across the frontier into Burma, and it is said that a Burmese Raja was established on the throne at Ava who acknowledged the supremacy of Manipur. But the event which was fraught with the most fateful consequences for the people was the introduction, or, as some will have it, the revival of Hinduism. Another innovation was the rescission of the law prescribing the execution of the Raja's surplus sons, a liberal measure from which Gharib Nawaz was himself the first to suffer. In 1754, he was in the act of leading an expedition into Burma, accompanied by his eldest son Sham Shae, when on the banks of the Ningthi, about five days' journey from Manipur, he and his eldest son were surprised and killed by a force sent by Jeet Shae,* one of his younger sons, who had cast a covetous eye upon the throne.

This was but the beginning of the dreary tale of treason, rebellion, and intrigue which makes up the modern history of Manipur.† Like the priest of Aricia, most of the rulers of the State have remained seated on the *gadi*, only

Three Rajas
between
1754 and
1764.

* Dun in his Gazetteer calls Jeet Shae, Oogut Shah or Kakeelal thaba.

† It is thus described by Mackenzie in his North-East Frontier, p. 149. "The early history of Manipur was barbarous in the extreme. It was not only marked by constant raids of the Manipuris into Burma, and of the Burmese into Manipur, but by internal wars of the most savage and revolting type, in which sons murdered fathers and brothers murdered brothers without a single trait of heroism to relieve the dark scene of blood and treachery.

so long as they have been able to repel the perpetual assaults that have been made upon it by other aspirants. This in itself was bad enough, but the fact that the other aspirants were generally brothers of the reigning chief was an additional aggravation of the original offence of treason. Jeet Shae only reigned for five years, and was then driven forth by his brother Burut Shae, to die an exile in the Jaintia Hills.

Burut Shae only lived for two years after the expulsion of his predecessor, and on his death, the succession devolved on Guru Sham, the eldest son of Sham Shae and the grandson of Gharib Nawaz. This man was a cripple, and, so sensible was he of the disabilities caused by this infirmity, that he invited his brother Jaie Singh or Bhaggo Chandra to assist him in the administration of the country.

Guru Sham died in 1764, and Manipur then passed through a very dark period of its history. A year before the death of the crippled chief, the Burmese defeated the Manipuri forces and advanced into the valley. Though they only occupied it for a few days they were guilty of terrible atrocities, and carried away with them a great quantity of slaves. The Manipuris, feeling themselves too weak to oppose their national enemy unassisted, made overtures to the British. A small force under Captain Verelst was sent to their assistance in 1768, but the difficulties of transport proved insuperable, and it got no further than Cachar.

About 1765, the Burmese were again upon the move. The Manipuris met them at Tammu in the Kubo Valley but were defeated; the enemy entered the valley, and Jaie

Burmese
Invasion in
1768.

1764-1798.
Jaie Singh
Raja, but
driven from
the State
three times.

Singh was compelled to fly to Cachar and from thence into Assam. The Burmese placed a prince called Kelemba on the throne, but it was not for long that he enjoyed the sweets of power. In 1768, Jaie Singh returned from Assam, Kelemba fled to Burma, and, when in the following year he returned in the hope of being able to regain the *gadi*, he was killed by two Manipuris who gained access to his person by professing to be bearers of a message from Jaie Singh. But, though he died, he did not die unhavenged. In the following year his brothers entered the valley, and Jaie Singh was compelled to take refuge in Cachar. The miserable little State was then given up to anarchy and confusion, one pretender following another in quick succession on the throne, some of them being Manipuris and some Burmese.

After a time a Manipuri prince, by name Eremba, succeeded in introducing some form of settled government and some degree of order, and in the third year of his reign actually repulsed the Burmese who were engaged in one of their periodical invasions of the valley. On hearing of this most unusual success, Jaie Singh once more returned and took up the reins of Government which Eremba resigned with a humility which seems strangely unnatural in a Manipuri prince. In the following year the Burmese again invaded Manipur, Jaie Singh again sought safety in flight, and the State was once more handed over to all the miseries of misrule and anarchy.

After a time Jaie Singh once more succeeded in returning and establishing himself upon the throne. But he was now becoming an old man, and such dignity as still attached to the position of Raja of this petty State was

hardly sufficient to compensate for the terrible uncertainties of the position. Three times had he been driven from his throne, and in his declining years he seems to have longed for a less strenuous and eventful life. In 1798, he abdicated in favour of his eldest son Rabino Chandra, and went on a pilgrimage to Nadia, where he presently expired.

Rabino reigned for three years and then fell a victim to Gharib Nawaz's mistaken liberality in exempting the brothers of the heir-apparent from assassination. One afternoon he was peacefully engaged in looking on at a hockey match when he was murdered by the orders of one of his half-brothers Madu Chandra.

1798-1804.
Two Rajas
in succession
killed by
their half-
brothers.

Madu Chandra did not remain long in possession of his ill-gotten gains. He was driven from the State by one of his brothers, Charjit Singh, and fled as usual to Cachar. Here he married the Raja's daughter and was supplied with men and arms, but his attempt to regain the *gadi* proved unsuccessful and he was killed by Charjit's troops.

It was too much to suppose that Charjit could remain for any length of time in unmolested possession of the throne, and Madu Chandra's place was quickly filled by another brother, Marjit Singh. Several engagements took place, but fortune did not favour the pretender, and he was compelled like his predecessors to take refuge in Cachar. Here he met with far from hospitable treatment. He had taken with him a famous hockey pony which aroused the envy of Gobind Chandra, the brother of the reigning Raja. When his offers to purchase were rejected, the prince seized the pony, relying

1804. Charjit
attacked by
his brother
Marjit, at
first success-
ful but after-
wards de-
feated and
driven out.

on the title of *force majeure*, and Marjit retired in dudgeon from the State. He then proceeded by sea to Rangoon, succeeded in obtaining assistance from the Burmese king, and with troops supplied to him by the hereditary enemy of his country, marched into Manipur and drove Charjit from the valley.

Marjit
reigns from
1812-1819.

For seven years Manipur enjoyed a period of tranquility to which for long the people had been unaccustomed. Marjit avenged himself for the loss of his pony by invading Cachar and dividing most of that fertile district between his two brothers Charjit, to whom he had now been reconciled, and Gambhir Singh.* But in 1819, Marjit somewhat foolishly attempted to assert his independence of the Burmese, and when called upon to attend the court as a feudatory of the king, declined to do so. It was not to be supposed that the Burmese would quietly swallow the affront that had been put upon them. An army marched into Manipur, Marjit was compelled to fly, and the Burmese remained in occupation of the country.

Manipur in
hands of
Burmese
from 1819-
1824.

Marjit retired according to the custom of his predecessors to Cachar, which at that time was in the practical occupation of his brothers Charjit and Gambhir Singh, and the Burmese set up two puppet princes as the nominal rulers of Manipur. In 1823, the Burmese advanced across the hills into Cachar. They were now operating at a considerable distance from their base, and they were defeated and driven back by Gambhir Singh, who had taken up a strong position in the Surma Valley.

* According to Pemberton (p. 45), Charjit was already a personage in Cachar and assisted Gobind Chand in getting rid of Marjit.

In the following year they returned again, but war had by this time been declared between the British and the Burmese, and the latter were completely routed by the Manipuris supported by the British troops. The line of their retreat lay through the most difficult and inhospitable country, and in their attempt to extricate their army they suffered serious loss. On reaching the valley of Manipur, they took up a position near Ningail. From this they were easily ejected by the Manipuris, and they then withdrew to their own country without any further attempt to retain the territory they had occupied for upwards of five years.

It is said that on the final withdrawal of the Burmese the adult male population of the valley of Manipur did not exceed 3,000 souls.* At first sight this would seem to be an extraordinarily low estimate, but great numbers of the people had been killed in action or carried into captivity, or had fled for safety to the Surma Valley. In the short space of sixty years, a period which is easily included in the memories of a single individual, the State had been invaded no less than four times by the Burmese, and for the last five years of this period they had remained in occupation of the country. No less than six times was the reigning Raja driven from the *gadi*, and this takes no account of the numerous puppet princes, who followed one another in quick succession during the two distinct periods in which the country was reduced to a hopeless state of anarchy. Twice had the reigning prince been murdered, and on

Summary of
events be-
tween 1764
and 1824.

* Annual Report of the Manipur Political Agency for 1868-69, by Dr. B. Brown, Political Agent, Manipur, p. 65.

both occasions he had been murdered by the order of his own brother.

Gambhir
Singh, 1825-
1834.

After the expulsion of the Burmese it was considered that both Charjit and Marjit were too old to undertake so onerous a task as the management of such a State as Manipur, and the sceptre accordingly devolved upon their younger brother Gambhir Singh. Five hundred muskets had already been supplied by the British Government to the Manipuris to assist them in recovering their country, and this valuable present was shortly afterwards supplemented by the gift of 1,500 more, a gift which added enormously to their value as a fighting force. Gambhir Singh then proceeded to advance against the Burmese, and succeeded in occupying the Kubo Valley which he held till 1824. It was in that year restored to Burma, at the request of the British Government who compensated Manipur for this loss of territory by an annual payment of the sum of Rs. 6,000 a payment which continues to be made at the present day, the actual amount now given being Rs. 6,270.

Regency of
Nur Singh.

In 1834, Gambhir Singh died leaving an infant son, and Nur Singh, the *senapati* or General-in-Chief, placed the baby on the *gadi* and assumed himself the office and dignity of regent. Nur Singh was himself a great-grandson of Gharib Nawaz, and thus stood in the same relation to the founder of the dynasty as Gambhir Singh, Charjit, and Marjit. They, however, traced their descent through the eldest son Sham Shae, while Nur Singh was a grandson of the eleventh son Dhorshai. It was not, however, to be supposed that the other descendants

of Gharib Nawaz would acquiesce in the accession of a baby to the throne without a struggle.

In 1838, Turring Romba, the eldest son of Raja Robino Chandra, who was the elder brother of Gambhir Singh and had been murdered in 1801, invaded the valley with 800 men. But the regent was not the man to be taken unawares. Turring was killed, and most of his followers either killed or taken prisoner. Within the next few years two more attempts were made to drive the baby from his throne. One of these raids was led by two of Marjit's sons, the other, by two sons of Charjit Singh. Nur Singh was still too much for the raiders, and the people showed no desire for a change of rulers. All of these four swash bucklers were killed, and their scanty band of followers either slain or taken prisoner.

In 1844, Nur Singh was attacked by a traitor from within the camp. As the regent was returning from an evening visit to the temple, he was assailed by an assassin, who inflicted a severe, but luckily not mortal wound. The conspirators were arrested, and the Rani fled to Cachar with her infant son. Here she gave out that she had fled under the impression that Nur Singh was dead, and his government overthrown; but it was more generally believed that she had been the real instigator of the plot, and that on its failure she had been compelled to seek safety in flight.

This at any rate was the view to which Nur Singh inclined, and without further ado he stepped into the place which had been vacated by the action of the Queen mother. He did not live to enjoy it long, and

Nur Singh
assumes
sovereignty,
1844-1850.

in 1850, died of cholera. Shortly before his death he defeated an expedition led by Milai Romba and his brother, who were descendants of Raja Churai Romba and had designs upon the throne. Their followers were routed, and one of the brothers killed in action, the other captured and put to death.

Debendra
Singh.

Nur Singh was succeeded by his brother Debendra Singh, who enjoyed a troubled reign of three months' duration. The three sons of Nur Singh at once retired to Cachar, and brought back Chandra Kirti Singh, the son of Gambhir Singh, for whom Nur Singh had acted as regent for ten years. The people made no concealment of their preference for the son of their old Raja, and Debendra Singh was compelled to retire to the usual refuge of disappointed Manipuri princes.

Chandra
Kirti Singh,
1850.

The new Raja then made the eldest son of Nur Singh, *jubraj* or heir-apparent, and another son *senapati* or commander of the forces; but within a fortnight another revolution was in progress. The three sons of Nur Singh, who had turned out Debendra Singh to put Chandra Kirti Singh in, within a fortnight combined with a younger brother of Debendra Singh to overthrow the man they had themselves conspired to place upon the *gadi*. They were, however, defeated, and as usual, fled to Cachar. Debendra Singh then made two attempts to recover his lost throne, but neither of them were successful. In 1851, his son combined with two of Nur Singh's sons to try and wrest the sceptre from the Raja, but the conspirators were defeated and Debendra's son was killed. Hope springs, however, eternal in the Manipuri breast, and in the following year the sons of

two other Manipuri Rajas, Madu Chandra and Marjit, made an attempt, which was as usual unsuccessful. For seven years there was a cessation of these raids, but in 1859, one Mypak, a descendant from the original Gharib Nawaz, tried his luck and failed. In 1862, he made a second attempt, equally unsuccessful, and was wounded and made prisoner. In 1864, Kanai Singh, Marjit's son, made a second bid for the crown, but again without success, and in 1866, Gokul Singh, a younger son of Debendra Singh, headed a raid from Cachar. On this occasion an incident occurred which was quite in keeping with the usual proceedings of this little State; proceedings which would seem almost too grotesquely foolish even for burlesque, if the results were not so tragic for the principal performers in the drama. The Raja's men moved out to meet the raiders, and towards evening entrenched themselves in the position they had taken up. In the meanwhile a party of sepoys, who had been sent from Cachar in pursuit of Gokul Singh, came up, and, finding a number of Manipuris holding a position, jumped to the conclusion that these were the raiders led by Gokul Singh. The same idea occurred to the Manipuri troops, who were not aware that any sepoys were coming from Cachar. A smart action ensued, and, while the two parties sent to capture Gokul Singh were busily engaged in pounding one another, Gokul Singh himself slipped away unobserved.

It would be difficult to find any parallel for such a State as Manipur. Reference has been already made to the terrible state of anarchy that prevailed at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Thirteen
raids and
two attempt-
ed revolu-
tions in 32
years.

Much of the trouble of that troublous time was due to the treachery of the Manipuri princes, a treachery which did not even spare a brother or a father. But much was due to the Burmese, and for their invasions the Manipuris were only partially responsible; though, had they not been so hopelessly divided, they would probably have succeeded in repelling the attacks that were made upon the valley. But after the appointment of a Political Agent in 1835, they were practically guaranteed against invasion from without, and the troubles that beset them were all of their own making. Even the President of a South American Republic, even a political leader in the Balkan States, would turn with disgust from such a sorry record, such a pitiful tale of political incapacity and intrigue. In the short space of 32 years, between 1834 and 1866, no less than thirteen attempts were made upon the throne by filibustering adventurers from Cachar, and there were no less than two attempts at revolution from within. Except in the case of the one raid which was successful, and which placed Chandra Kirti Singh upon the throne, it can hardly be said that any of the pretenders had the smallest claim to oust the chief who happened to be in possession at the time. Rajas of Manipur have many sons, the right of primogeniture is but imperfectly acknowledged, and any descendant of the ruling house who felt that he had the very smallest prospect of success, did not hesitate to make an attempt upon the *gadi*.

Sur Chandra
Singh, 1886.

In May 1886, Chandra Kirti Singh died and was succeeded by his eldest son Sur Chandra Singh. As usual, attempts were made by other pretenders to drive

him from the throne. Bara Chauba Singh, the eldest son of Nur Singh, headed a rising which nearly proved successful, but was ultimately defeated and compelled to fly. In October 1886, he started from Cachar with a force of 300 men, but was followed by Lieutenant Harris with 100 military police. Bara Chauba took up his position on a small hill about three miles from Imphal, but was defeated without difficulty and surrendered. He and his relatives were deported to Hazaribagh, and those of his followers who were British subjects were sentenced by the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar to various terms of imprisonment for waging war upon a friendly State.

In 1887, two more attempts were made, both of which occurred in the month of September. The first was headed by the *wangkhaираpka*, or chief judicial officer of the State. It was quelled without difficulty by the Manipuri troops; and the leader was shot dead when making a rush upon the Raja's private residence. The second was headed by Jogendra Singh, the son of a man called Chiba, who had been killed when heading a revolt against Nur Singh some 40 years before. The insurgents, about 200 in number, entered the State from Cachar, hotly pursued by a detachment of the military police. They were met by a company of the 44th Gurkha Light Infantry (now 8th Gurkha Rifles) under Lieutenant Row, and Jogendra Singh and 14 of his followers were killed, while 38 were taken prisoner.

The revolution that took place in 1890 was successful, and Sur Chandra Singh was driven from his palace by his two youngest brothers. They were instigated to this act of treachery by the third brother Tekendrajit,

Sur Chandra
Singh ex-
pelled in
1890.

the *senapati* or chief military officer in the State. The deposed Raja took refuge in the residency, and there formally resigned the crown, announcing the fact of his abdication in a letter to the *senapati*, and returning to the palace the silver sword of state. He then withdrew to that home of lost Manipuri causes, Cachar. But as soon as he reached British territory he repudiated his deed of abdication and applied to the Government for assistance in the recovery of the throne.

The arrest of
the *Senapati*
ordered.

Such a proposal did not commend itself to the Government of India. They decided to recognise as Raja the second brother Kula Chandra Dhaja Singh, who, on the flight of Sur Chandra, had proclaimed his accession to the *gadi*; but directed that the turbulent *senapati* who had been the leading spirit in the recent revolution, should be deported from the State. The *senapati* was, however, very popular with the Manipuris, and this was probably the principal cause of the determined opposition offered to his arrest. To carry out these orders the Chief Commissioner, with an escort of 400 sepoys of the 42nd and 44th Gurkha Rifles (now the 6th and 8th) under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Skene, proceeded to Manipur, and arrived at Imphal on March 22nd. He was received with every show of outward respect, but it was a significant fact that the salute was fired from within the Fort, and that the guns were not as usual brought out to the polo ground. A durbar was announced for noon on the same day, but though Kula Chandra presented himself at the residency, the *senapati* sent his excuses and stated that he was too ill to come. The Chief Commissioner declined to hold a

darbar in the absence of the *senapati*, and, as the Raja was unable to procure his attendance, he was allowed to leave. In the afternoon the Political Agent visited the palace, and informed the Raja that the darbar would be held at 9 A.M. on the following day, March 23rd. The day and the hour came, but neither the Raja nor the *senapati* appeared. An ultimatum was then sent to the palace to the effect that if the *senapati* was not given up without more ado, steps would be taken to have him seized by force. The Political Agent also spent some hours in consultation with the Raja, and endeavoured to induce him to comply with the demands of Government, but without effect.

Shortly before daybreak on March 24th, two parties of men were sent to arrest the *senapati* in his house, which was situated about a quarter of a mile away to the north-east, just outside the strong wall which encircled the precincts of the palace. The first party, under the Command of Lieutenant Brackenbury, approached the house from the east. They appear to have advanced too far, and Lieutenant Brackenbury was mortally wounded. The Manipuris lining the inner wall of the palace then opened fire from the south, and the sepoy, assailed as they were in front and on the flank, fell back. In the meanwhile, the second party under Captain Butcher had succeeded in capturing the house, but the *senapati* had flown, and they merely continued to hold the house and temple, from which they replied to the desultory fire which was opened from the northern wall of the palace enclosure. The western gate of the fort was also seized; but in the afternoon the troops were withdrawn

The fighting
on March
24th.

from these two advanced positions, and concentrated in the residency. The Manipuris had been firing on this building during the afternoon, but the bombardment seems to have done comparatively little damage. In the evening the cease fire was sounded, and the Chief Commissioner attempted to enter into negotiations with the enemy. The correspondence proved abortive, but a message was shortly afterwards received to the effect that the *senapati* was anxious to confer with Mr. Quinton somewhere between the residency and the main gate of the fort. The Chief Commissioner moved away down the road attended or followed by the Political Agent Mr. Grimwood, Lieutenant-Colonel Skene, Lieutenant Simpson, and the Private Secretary, Mr. Cossins. The party advanced further and further down the road, till at last they could dimly be descried through the gathering darkness standing in front of the main gate. Then they disappeared, and were never seen again alive by European eyes. The officers remaining in the residency continued to look down the road striving to catch a glimpse of the returning party. As time went on their anxiety grew apace, but they hesitated to take any decisive action for fear lest they might in some way prejudice the course of the negotiations. About midnight a voice called from the fort in Manipuri, "the Chief Commissioner will not return," and immediately afterwards the Manipuris began once more to open fire upon the residency. It was then decided by the officers who had assumed command in the absence of Colonel Skene, to retire towards Cachar, and no time was lost in giving effect to this decision.

From the accounts given by the natives who were present, it appears that the British officers had a meeting with the *senapati* and other ministers outside the durbar hall. No conclusion had been arrived at, and the officers had started to return, when they were hemmed in by a menacing and angry crowd. The ministers requested them to re-enter the durbar hall, as they were doubtful whether they could restrain the mob, but, as they were going there, Mr. Grimwood received a mortal wound from a spear, and Lieutenant Simpson, who immediately attacked the murderer, was slashed across the head with a dao. It is doubtful whether this attack was premeditated, and whether at the time when the Chief Commissioner was asked to enter the fort, the *senapati* had any treacherous designs upon his life. But by a curious process of reasoning they seem to have considered that, now that one of the five had been murderously assaulted, there was nothing to be gained by abstaining from further treachery. The officers were detained for some time in the durbar hall, an insignificant building of lath and plaister containing several rooms, and resembling a small bungalow more than a hall of audience. They were then brought out bound, thrown on the ground in front of the two dragons that stood before the palace wall, and beheaded in the somewhat barbarous Manipuri fashion.

Outside Imphal a wanton and unprovoked attack was made upon the Superintendent of Telegraphs, Mr. Melville. That unfortunate gentleman left Manipur on March 23rd, and proceeded by easy stages towards Kohima, as he was not aware that there was any

Fate of the
Chief Com-
missioner
and his
companions.

Murder of
Mr. Melville.

risk of disturbances occurring. On March 25th, he was at Maiangkang, about 33 miles from Imphal, and there discovered that he was unable to communicate by wire either with Manipur or Kohima. In the afternoon a party of Manipuris rode into the post, but as there was a Manipuri thana at the place there was nothing in this incident to arouse suspicion. Mr. Melville was a cripple, he was only accompanied by a Eurasian signaller and his servants, and, ignorant as he was of any cause for treachery, he was entirely unprepared. Even so the Manipuris did not venture to attack him openly, but summoned the Nagas from a neighbouring village, and waited for the night to come and hide their movements. They then began shouting and creating a disturbance outside the rest-house, and when the signaller came out to learn the meaning of this demonstration, they fired a volley which stretched him mortally wounded in the verandah. Mr. Melville and his servants escaped out by the back and groped their way up a deep ditch, but lame as he was, the unfortunate gentleman could not go far. The Manipuris burnt the rest-house, but on the following morning, when they came to examine the scene of their brave exploit, they could only discover the corpse of a single Saheb amongst the ashes. A search was instituted without delay, and Mr. Melville was found crouching in the ditch. A Naga promptly ran him through with a spear, and his head was carried off in triumph. In Manipur itself the residency, the post office, and the treasury were destroyed by fire, and the graves in the garden of the residency were desecrated. Cash,

notes, and stamps to the value of more than Rs. 1,85,000 were also looted.

The following account of the steps taken to reduce the rebels is reproduced from the account given in the Report of the Political Agent for 1891-92 :—

Restoration
of order in
Manipur.

“ As soon, however, as the news of the disaster was brought to Kohima by fugitive sepoys and others, the Deputy Commissioner at once marched on Mao, and drove back some Manipuri forces. On the Cachar side troops were moved to the Barak river, and measures were taken to occupy the Manipur capital by British troops. Three columns marched on Manipur from Kohima, Silchar, and Tammu, and arrived before the palace on the morning of the 27th April, to find that the Regent and his brother had taken to flight on the previous evening towards the Tankul Hills, and the leading Manipuris were in hiding in the valley. The palace had been looted by the villagers, the arsenal was destroyed, and the capital completely evacuated. A detachment of Mounted Infantry were quickly sent in pursuit of the fugitives, who were followed up into the Tankul Hills, where further pursuit was abandoned owing to the paths being impassable for ponies. Foot soldiers then took up the chase, but without success; in the meanwhile some Kukis, who were armed by me, headed the princes and compelled them to return to the valley, where one by one they were captured by Manipuris in my employ, the Senapati being the last to be arrested on the 23rd May.

Hearing of the disaster at Manipur, the Jemadar in Command of the Military detachment of 30 sepoys, 43rd Gurkha Rifles, at Langthabal, the British cantonment three miles to the south of the capital, withdrew his detachment in good order to Tammu. Here he met the gallant Lieutenant (now Major) Grant, who, on hearing the news, at once marched on Manipur, taking with him the Jemadar's detachment, in addition to 50 men of his own regiment, the 12th Regiment (2nd Burma Battalion), Madras Infantry. At Thobal, 14 miles from Manipur, Lieutenant Grant's force was met by the Manipuri troops, who, however, failed to dislodge him from the position he had taken up at one end of the village. He was, however, unable to advance, and was recalled to Tammu, which he succeeded in reaching without loss. A Panjabi trader at Langthabal, named Hafiz Fateh Shah, gave much assistance to the detachment retiring on Tammu, and again to Lieutenant Grant on his advance on Manipur. For his loyalty and bravery on these occasions, he

has been rewarded by a money payment of Rs. 100, 12 plough cattle and a grant of 20 acres of land in Manipur rent free for life. He has also been given the title of "Lion hearted."

The only serious opposition to the march on Manipur was met by the Burma column near Pael, where some 300 of the enemy had encamped in a small earthwork. Of this number, 200 unwisely permitted themselves to be surrounded, and in the fight that ensued 193 were killed, our loss being one native officer killed and three British officers, one native officer, and one sepoy wounded. On arrival at Manipur the bodies of our officers and men were interred in the Residency cemetery; and the surplus troops shortly afterwards returned to India and Burma. The summer garrison retained in the valley comprised 8th Mountain Battery, 1-2nd Gurkha Rifles, 43rd Gurkha Rifles, 44th Gurkha Rifles. In October the 1-2nd Gurkha Rifles returned to India, and in the following month the Mountain Battery marched to Burma. The 44th Gurkha Rifles on being relieved by a wing of the 42nd Gurkha Rifles from Kohima returned to Shillong, and the permanent garrison in Manipur now consists of the 43rd Gurkha Rifles and the wing of the 42nd Gurkha Rifles."

**Punishment
of the guilty.**

In the meanwhile those principally responsible for the murder of the British officers were placed upon their trial. Kula Chandra, the acting Raja, Tekendrajit the *senapati*, and Angao Singh the third brother were brought before a special commission, which sentenced the *senapati* to death and the other two to transportation for life. The Tankul general, one of the most influential persons in the State, Niranjana Subadar, an ex-sepoy of the 84th Native Infantry, and Kajao Manipuri, the actual murderer of Mr. Grimwood, were all sentenced to death by the Political Agent. Gallows were erected on the polo ground, and the sentences duly carried out. As far as the eye could see the plain was white with women. In the Raja's days a criminal sentenced to death was occasionally reprieved if a sufficient number of women appeared to intercede for him, and, hoping that possibly

the old custom might still prevail, the women had assembled in their thousands. As the drop fell and the *senapati* and Tankul general were launched into eternity, a deep groan went up from the assembled throng.

The Government of India declared that the Manipur State was forfeit to the crown, but decided in their clemency to regrant it to a scion of a junior branch.* Their choice fell upon Chura Chand, the youngest of five brothers who were the great grandsons of Nur Singh through his fifth son Bhogendra. It has been already shown that Nur Singh, like Gambhir Singh (the father of Sur Chandra Kirti Singh), was a great-grandson of Gharib Nawaz, but he traced his descent through a younger son. The people, it is said, received the news with some surprise and disappointment. The common folk were in favour of annexation, and could not understand why, if the State was to be regranted, a boy should be selected, who, if nominally of royal descent, belonged to a family whose circumstances and surroundings were of the humblest.† Since 1891, the affairs of the State have been administered by the Political Agent during the minority of the Raja, and various reforms, which will be described in the following chapters, have been initiated.

The history of the Royal family, and of the internecine feuds with which it has been torn, has now been traced from the time of Gharib Nawaz, the founder of the

Regrant of
Manipur
State.

History of
the Political
Agency.

* Notification No. 1700 E, dated 21st August, 1891.

† The Rajkumars of Manipur unless holding office differ in no way from the ordinary peasant. The women folk sell in the bazar, and the widow of a Raja sometimes has an establishment of a single servant and does not even possess a chair to offer to her visitors.

present dynasty, and the ancestor of innumerable hordes of Rajkumars. It now remains to refer to various other matters concerned with the history and administration of the State.

A Political Agent was first appointed in 1835, when the European officer deputed to supervise the Manipur levy was withdrawn. He was posted in the valley "for the preservation of a friendly intercourse and as a medium of communication with the Manipur Government, and, as occasion may require, with the Burmese authorities on that frontier, and more especially to prevent border feuds, which might lead to hostilities between the Manipuris and the Burmese." * In 1870, his duties were further defined by Government, and were said to consist primarily in insisting upon a strict fulfilment of the duties which the Raja is bound by treaty to perform, and in bringing his influence gently and gradually to bear upon the Raja for the reform of abuses in his internal administration.†

Proposal to
abolish the
Agency.

In 1861, the Civil Finance Commission under the presidency of Sir Richard Temple proposed that the Political Agency at Manipur should be abolished. The proposal did not commend itself to the Government of India, and it is said that the mere rumour of impending change was productive of ill effects in Manipur. "Every British subject made arrangements to leave. Trade with Burma almost ceased. Unoffending Nagas and Kukis who had been induced by former Political Agents to come down from their hills, were seized and

* Political correspondence. February 11th, 1835, No. 106.

† Political A. September, 1870, No. 169.

enslaved, and the people of one village under the protection of the Agent were ordered to pay Rs. 1,600 to realize which they had to sell their families.*” On the removal of Dr. Dillon in 1863, the question of the retention of the Political Agent was again raised, and in February 1864, the Raja himself asked that an officer might be posted in the valley. It was finally decided to accede to his request, for reasons which were set forth as follows in the orders of the Government of India. “The past history of the country shows that no Chief has been able to manage the people: they have one and all proved cruel, oppressive, and weak. The country has been the scene of civil wars, murders, devastation, and misery under the nominal control of the Chiefs; while as a rule, peace, order, and comparative prosperity reigned while a British Agent was present. Lastly, but not least, both the Chief himself and his people desire to have a British Agent amongst them; they have told Captain Stewart that the presence of one is equal to a brigade as regards the security of the country.†”

The Raja seems to have been anxious enough to receive a representative of the Government at his court, but the treatment accorded to him when he came was often far from satisfactory. In 1862, Dr. Dillon was appointed Agent, and in the following year the Raja submitted to the Government of India a document in which he formulated a number of serious charges against their local representative. No detailed enquiry was made

Hostile
attitude of
Raja to-
wards
Political
Agent.

* Precis of correspondence regarding Manipur affairs, by J. Clark, 1879, page 23.

† Political A. April, 1864, No. 108.

into these charges, as on other grounds the Governor General in Council was of opinion that Dr. Dillon had shewn that he was not qualified for the appointment which he held. Ten years later, charges were brought against the Officiating Political Agent, Colonel Thomson, which were found by the Government of India to be entirely false. Again in 1876, complaints were made to the Chief Commissioner against the Political Agent Dr. Brown. Colonel Keatinge warned the Raja that charges of this nature should not be lightly made against the representative of Government accredited to his court, but the Chief replied that he had satisfied himself by a strict examination that they were true. Orders were accordingly issued for an enquiry to be held in Manipur, and the conduct of the proceedings was entrusted to Colonel Sherer, the Deputy Commissioner of Darrang. Dr. Brown was too ill to attend during the proceedings, and died the day before their termination,* but he handed in a written statement and named the witnesses he wished to call on his behalf. On Colonel Sherer's report the Government of India remarked that there could be little doubt that much of what was alleged against Dr. Brown was untrue, trivial, and childish. They desired, however, that further evidence should be taken with regard to the 19th charge, non-payment of coolies; and Captain Durand, who had been appointed to officiate as Political Agent, was entrusted with the enquiry. The conclusion

* The Political Agents of Manipur have been unfortunate. In the residency garden there are the tombs of no less than four, who died, two of them violent deaths, between 1876 and 1891. The first Political Agent is buried at Laugthal,

come to by this officer was that the charges brought against Dr. Brown were the result of a deliberate conspiracy. The Raja and all the principal officers of the State were implicated, and evidence more or less false had been given throughout. A severe reproof was in consequence transmitted from the Government of India to the Raja.

The following account is given by Captain Durand of the position of the Political Agent :

Unsatisfactory position of the Political Agent.

"The Political Agent is dependent on the will and pleasure of the Maharaja for everything. His every word and movement are known to the Maharaja. He is in fact a British officer under Manipur surveillance. If the Maharaja is not pleased with the Political Agent he cannot get anything—he is ostracised; from bad coarse black atta which the Maharaja sells him as a favour, to the dhobi who washes his clothes, and the Nagas who work in his garden; he cannot purchase anything at any price. The court is almost openly hostile, though they have pliancy enough to pretend to a great regard for the Political Agent and the Sirkar." *

But it was not only in his attitude towards the Political Agent that the conduct of Chandra Kirti Singh was not above suspicion. In 1850, it became clear that Manipur was giving assistance to the Angami Nagas who were at that time a serious source of embarrassment to the Administration. Such conduct elicited a severe reproof from the Imperial Government, and for a time at any rate there was some improvement. In 1872-73, the Raja again adopted a most unseemly attitude, when steps were being taken for the demarcation of the boundary between Manipur and the Naga Hills. Every obstruction possible was offered, and the Raja even had

Manipur aids Angamis and opposes demarcation of frontier.

* Precipis of correspondence regarding Manipur affairs, by J. Clark, p. 28.

the effrontery to expressly "forbid" the Political Agent to enter the eastern portion of his territories. The Maharaja was sternly called to account by the Supreme Government, and was required to submit an ample apology for his improper conduct.

But is of
assistance in
the mutiny
and against
Lushais.

On the other hand, the attitude of the Raja during the mutiny was quite correct, and he was of material assistance in the Lushai expedition of 1871-72. Again in 1879, it was the timely appearance of Colonel Johnstone with the Manipuri troops which saved the garrison of Kohima from disaster. It must, however, be borne in mind that the Manipuris had no grounds for entertaining any feelings other than those of friendliness towards the British Government. It was to this Government that they owed their deliverance from Burma, their hereditary enemy. It was this Government that had strengthened their hands and so enabled them to subdue the hill tribes that surround the valley. On the north they were restrained from proceeding too far against the Angami Nagas, but activity in this quarter was likely to have few practical results. The various Political Agents seem to have been all agreed in condemning the native form of Government as very bad, but this is a question which it is hardly necessary to elaborate in a Gazetteer.* There was very little interference with the internal administration of the State, and the practical result of the connection of the British Government with Manipur was merely to guarantee it from invasion from without.

* The opinions of the Political Agents will be found summarised in the *Precis* of correspondence regarding Manipur affairs, by J. Clark, page 5.

A lengthy account of the relations of Manipur with Burma and with the tribes on the southern frontier, the Kamhows, Kukis, and Lushais, will be found in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir Alexander) Mackenzie, pages 160-212. The annexation of Burma and the Lushai Hills has put a stop to all trouble on that frontier, and no useful purpose would now be served by summarising the story of these raids.

Relations
with Burma
and tribes on
the southern
Frontier.

The events of 1891, if they did nothing else, afforded an excellent example of the necessity that exists for constant vigilance on the North-East Frontier. The Manipuris had a short way with the hillmen. The possession of muskets gave them an immense advantage over savages armed with spears and bill-hooks, and turbulence and insubordination were suppressed with stern severity. So firm was their rule that by some it was thought that the leopard had actually changed its spots, and that Nagas and Kukis had lost even the potentialities of violence. Lieutenant Dun, in 1882, declared that the Tankuls were thoroughly subject to the Manipuris and were "not in the least warlike." As soon as the Manipuri sepoys were withdrawn in 1891, this tribe reverted to the customs of its ancestors, and decided six longstanding disputes in its own way. Two of them were settled without actual homicide, but the remaining four cost altogether 80 lives. In the north-west corner of the State the Kukis raided the Kabui Naga village of Atteng and killed fifty-two persons, losing two of their own men in doing so. They also acted in a peculiarly treacherous manner towards the Nagas of the Makui village near Kaitemabi. These Nagas were in charge of

Turbulence
of the hill
tribes in
1891.

a state granary, and, on their refusing to supply the Kukis with some of the dhan, three of them were attacked and killed. The Kukis expressed regret for this occurrence, and in order to re-establish good relations invited the Nagas to a feast, at which they proposed to re-cement the bonds of friendship. The Nagas were weak enough to trust these savages, with the result that half-way through the meal the Kukis suddenly turned upon their guests and murdered seventeen! In addition to these more or less wholesale operations, seven persons were at various times murdered by Nagas on the Kohima-Manipur road, so that travelling in this portion of the State was a thing not wholly devoid of interest and excitement.

The Kuki
raid on
Swemi in
1893.

In the following year affairs were fairly quiet, and only seven murders were reported from the hills, though one of these murders was fraught with serious consequences. A Kuki, by name Toki, was of opinion that the Naga village of Swemi had stolen some of his paddy. When he went to complain, Swemi, far from giving satisfaction, killed the Naga he had taken with him to act as an interpreter. This occurred in December, 1892, and at first the Kukis seemed to take the matter fairly quietly. But all the while they were taking stock of their resources, and preparing a vengeance which, if long delayed, was complete and thorough when it came. Four months later they fell upon the doomed village in the gray light of the early morning when the people were still sleeping in their houses. Taken unawares they could not fight, and there was no time to fly; and when the avengers of the murdered interpreter and the stolen

grain had finished their grim work, they found that they had accounted for 286 of the offending villagers, 187 of whom were women and children. This raid was suitably punished; the hillmen then began to settle down once more, and during the last ten years have given comparatively little trouble.

CHAPTER III.

POPULATION.

Area and density—Imphal town—Villages—Growth of population—Birth-place—Sex—Marriage customs—Infirmities—Language—Caste—Physical appearance and moral characteristics—Hill tribes—Religion—Occupations—Games and amusements—Sradhs.

Density. THE Manipur State covers an area of 8,456 square miles and in 1901 had a population of 284,465, so that the density of the country as a whole is only 84 to the square mile. The greater part of the State consists, however, of hills, which can only support a sparse and scattered population, and in these mountain ranges there are only some 12 persons to the square mile. The area of the valley is not accurately known, but is probably about six hundred square miles. Here the density is a great deal higher, and is probably not less than 320 to the square mile, a figure which is considerably in excess of the rate recorded for any of the plains districts in the Province with the solitary exception of Sylhet.

Imphal town.

Manipur contains one town, Imphal, and 1,409 villages, 896 of which are situated in the hills. Imphal is, however, hardly a town in the sense in which that word

is generally understood. The site of the *pat* (the fortified enclosure in which prior to 1891 the Raja's palace stood) and a block of land to the west, have been constituted a reserve on which the Manipuris are not allowed to settle. Within the earthen ramparts of the *pat* are fine lines for the accommodation of eight companies of native troops, the military police hospital, the mess, and the bungalows of the regimental officers. All of these buildings are of red brick roofed with tiles, and the officers' houses recall the villas near Maidenhead or some other river-side resort more than the ordinary bungalow of the Indian plains. West of the *pat* is the residence of the Political Agent, and further back, beyond the afternoon bazar and the polo ground, is a row of *kaiyas'* shops, with the Manipuri court houses and the school close by. The rest of the town is nothing more than one huge village. The houses stand in spacious compounds, and are effectually hidden from the road by the screen of *ikra* which grows from the mud walls surrounding them. There are no shops, and the place is absolutely devoid of any urban features. Imphal is, in fact, nothing more than a cantonment situated at the northern end of an enormous village. In addition to the military lines the public buildings include the residency, the offices of the Political Agent and the Superintendent of the State, a post and a telegraph office, and a few smaller bungalows occupied by the Raja's tutor, the Assistant to the Political Agent, and the State Engineer. The central part of the town is well lighted with acetylene gas, far better lighted in fact than any other town in Assam. Acetylene gas, though

an excellent illuminating medium, is by no means cheap. Kerosine oil lamps were first tried, but so much oil was stolen from the lamps that it was found that the acetylene lamp, which was not exposed to depredations of this nature, was positively cheaper. There are seven protected tanks in the town from which the water is pumped and distributed through pipes to various localities. The Manipuri professes to be unable to drink this pipe water, but his scruples appear to be quickly disappearing. In each house there is a filthy pond into which is drained all the surface water from the compound, little channels being especially cut to facilitate the process. Here the Manipuri washes his clothes and person, and then draws his drinking-water. The rivers are full of water in the rains, but in the dry season shrink to shallow muddy streams creeping languidly along at the bottom of their beds. The banks are high and steep, and at this season of the year their crests are fully twenty feet above the level of the water. The roads in the town are well kept up, and though most of them are unmetalled, are in excellent order, at any rate in the cold weather.

Villages.

The ordinary Manipuri village resembles to some extent the villages of the Surma Valley. Little is to be seen from outside except bamboos, and to a stranger looking from above on to these shady groves, there is nothing to suggest that they are centres of population of anything more interesting than birds or monkeys. They are, however, much more clearly defined units than the villages of the Surma Valley. In Sylhet the bamboo groves seem to stretch for miles. Villages and hamlet

melt imperceptibly into one another, and it is often difficult to say where one begins and another ends. There is none of this uncertainty in Manipur. The village is set down fair and square in the middle of the rice fields tilled by its inhabitants, and it is sometimes several miles or more to its nearest neighbour. The houses have larger gardens than is usual in Assam, and the ground around the homestead is often sown with mustard. This garden is surrounded with a stout mud wall, and the place is fairly free from jungle. In Assam the cottages of the villagers are hemmed in by a thick wall of bamboos, plantains, areca palms, and other trees, which effectually exclude all light and air. The ground even in the winter time is damp, and wide-leaved arums cover the soil and add to the general humidity. This is not the case in Manipur. There are comparatively few bamboos or plantains, there are no areca palms, for they will not grow in this upland valley, and there is little jungle. The homestead is exposed to the purifying influences of the sun and air, and is a much healthier place to live in than the damp, dark cottages of the Assamese. In the hills the villages are generally built on a bare spot near the summit of a ridge. The houses are placed in proximity to one another and there are no gardens, so that a large Naga village almost attains the dignity of a little town.

The first census of Manipur was taken in 1881 and disclosed a population of 221,070. In 1891, the census schedules were filled up, but the papers were destroyed in the disturbances that occurred soon after, and there is no information available even with regard to the gross

Growth of
population.

population of the State. In 1901, the population was 284,465, which showed an increase of 28·61 per cent. in the 20 years. There is practically no immigration, and it is probable that a portion of the increase was due to the greater accuracy of the enumeration carried out under the direction of the Political Agent, the earlier census having been taken by the Durbar. A census of Manipur is not entirely free from difficulty. After the schedules had been filled up the entries had to be copied in Bengali on to slips of paper by persons who were acquainted with both Manipuri and Bengali, and the number of people who can read and write both Manipuri and Bengali is by no means large. These slips had then to be sent to the central census office at Gauhati, but the road at the time when they were despatched was very bad, and more than five weeks were consumed on the journey from Imphal to Dimapur.

Birthplace.

Manipur is most effectually cut off from the outside world, and 99 per cent. of the people censused there in 1901 had been born within its boundaries. About one-third of the total number of foreigners had come from the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh and were employed as cartmen and in other menial capacities. Bengal and Nepal together supplied rather more than another third, and there were a few artisans from the Punjab. Detailed figures for immigrants will be found in Table III. There are large colonies of Manipuris in the Surma Valley, but these people left their country during the troublous times in the first half of the 19th century, and in 1901 there were only 8,448 persons who had been born in Manipur, and were living at the time of the census in

British districts of Assam.* About one-third of these people were found in the Surma Valley, one-third in the Naga Hills, and one-sixth in the hills inhabited by the Lushais.

The women in Manipur exceed the men in numbers ^{Sex.} in spite of the preponderance of the male sex amongst the immigrant population. This holds good of the three main classes in the community, *i.e.*, the Manipuris, who style themselves Kshattriyas, the Nagas, and the Kukis. Amongst the Brahmans alone is there a deficiency of women. Few things are more difficult to ascertain than the laws which govern the proportions of the sexes, but the preponderance of women in Manipur is apparently due more to a moderately reasonable death-rate than to an exceptionally large supply of female babies, as under five there is not much difference between the numbers of the sexes. The women of Manipur are shrewd, capable people, who at all stages of their career are allowed the fullest liberty. They are not exposed to the risks of infant marriage,† or mewed up within the four walls of their houses, and the comparatively healthy life they lead is no doubt the principal cause of their longevity. The deficiency of Brahman women is no doubt partly due to the fact that they sometimes contract alliances with non-Brahman Manipuris and thus sink to the status of their husbands. Brahman men also not unfrequently marry beneath them, but such a proceeding in their case entails no loss of caste.

* There were, however, 44,700 Manipuris in the Surma Valley and 21,300 Kshattriyas. Most of the latter were probably Manipuris.

† Out of the 59,000 married women in Manipur in 1901 only 600 were less than 15 years of age.

Marriage
amongst
Manipuris.
The regular
ceremony.

In the plains there are three forms of marriage ceremony in vogue. Amongst the upper classes the preliminaries of the match are arranged by the guardians of the contracting parties, who are not allowed to have much to do with the selection of their future partners. When the arrangement is complete, the female friends of the bridegroom's family go to the girl's house with betelnut, sweetmeats, molasses, sugarcane, fruit, curds and light refreshments of this nature. These are distributed amongst the neighbours of the bride, who are then for the first time formally notified of the proposed alliance. This ceremony is called *Haijabokpuba*. Suits for breach of promise of marriage receive little encouragement in the State, for, though the food provided on this occasion costs about twenty rupees, the penalty assessed if the girl declines to comply with her engagements is only half that sum. No allowance is made for wounded feelings, and, if the boy is ungallant enough to break off the match, he escapes scot-free and his fiancée has to console herself as best she can. If all goes well a date is fixed for the final marriage ceremony, which is called *Luhongba*, and which generally takes place from six months to two years after the girl has attained puberty. In the afternoon the bridegroom goes to the bride's house, accompanied by his friends and relatives. Light refreshments, which are provided by the father of the bride, are handed round, and a Brahman is in attendance to perform the marriage ceremony. The sacred fire of mango wood is lighted, *ghi* is thrown into it, and the hands of the happy couple are tied together with a whip of *kusha* grass, while the priest

pronounces over them the appropriate *mantras*. The newly-married couple then retire inside the house, and a good deal of friendly chaff goes on amongst their boy and girl acquaintances. In the afternoon the bridegroom goes to his house, and in the evening his young wife is brought there in a dhuli and duly handed over to him. Both families make such presents to the newly-married couple as they can afford, but the obligatory expenses of the ceremony do not generally exceed some thirty or forty rupees. No price is demanded for the bride, unless she is of royal descent; the priest is content with a cloth and a rupee or two; and a sheet, which does not cost more than five or six annas, is sufficient wage for each of the musicians who have been engaged to attend the feast.

In cases where the people are too poor to afford even this moderate expenditure, the girl and the young man are taken by their guardians before some shrine, where, in the presence of the idol, the girl is formally made over to her husband. But simple and inexpensive though these forms of marriage are, they are generally dispensed with by the ordinary villager. Boys and girls have plenty of opportunity of meeting one another and falling in love like their brothers and sisters in the west, and after some months of courtship the damsel consents to elope with her young lover. He goes to her house at night with a party of friends armed with sticks to protect them from a rescue, the girl steals out after her parents are asleep, and they hurriedly make off to her lover's house. On the following morning an ambassador goes from the boy to the girl's home, and tells her father

The simple forms.

of all that has been done. If the match is a fairly reasonable one all will now be well, but if the boy is of inferior family the offended parents will decline to have anything more to do with their misguided daughter. Sometimes the young couple go to make their peace themselves. The old folks will be sitting in the house some few nights after the elopement, when suddenly weeping and wailing is heard outside the compound. The noise draws nearer, and at last the errant daughter and her lover present themselves before the outraged parents. At first there is no talk of forgiveness, but after a time the mother is won round, and peace is once more restored within the family. Four-fifths of the marriages of Manipur are said to begin with an elopement. The man while he is courting his bride naturally makes himself agreeable to her parents. He brings them little presents, works for them, and makes himself generally useful about the house and farm. The father of the girl does not wish to lose the services of his daughter or the attentions of his would-be son-in-law, and keeps putting off the marriage from month to month, till the young people are at last compelled to take the matter into their own hands. The marriage tie is not regarded with much sanctity in Manipur and can be dissolved by either side at will. The father keeps the children, but if there is an infant still at the breast it is left with the mother till it has been weaned. Adultery in the wife is regarded as a comparatively venial fault. Sometimes the husband turns her out, and the adulterer, if caught; is required to pay a penalty of Rs. 50; sometimes he merely gives the woman a good beating and lets the

matter go at that. The marriage customs of the hill tribes are described at length in the monographs by Mr. Hodson.

The following abstract shows out of 10,000 males *Infirmities*, the number afflicted with the four special infirmities recorded at the census of 1901.

	Manipur.	Assam.	India.
Insane ...	2	5	3
Deaf-mutes ...	2	9	6
Blind ...	6	10	12
Lepers ...	3	13	5

The proportion of afflicted persons is small, and it is possible that owing to the exceptional difficulties which attend the taking of a census in Manipur, the returns were not as accurate as they were elsewhere. There seems, however, to be little doubt that infirmities are far from common in the valley. In 1869 Dr. Brown reported that leprosy and madness were extremely rare, and that eye diseases and deformities were quite exceptional. The immunity from brain disease he attributed to abstinence from intoxicating drugs and liquors,* and it is only natural that in an unusually healthy population the number of those congenitally deaf should be exceptionally small.

The three principal languages spoken in the State *Language*. are Manipuri or Meithei, Naga, and Kuki. At the census of 1901 the enumerators did not record the different dialects spoken by the various Naga tribes but lumped

* It is doubtful whether temperance has much to do with the matter. The inhabitants of the Goalpara district are, as a whole, unusually temperate, and at the same time unusually mad.

them together under the one generic term. Dr. Grierson classifies them as follows :—

Sopvoma or Mao Naga, spoken by	...	10,000
Maram	" "	2,500
Miyangkhang	" "	5,000
Kwoireng	" "	5,500
Lahupa or Tankul	" "	25,000
Maring	" "	1,500
Kapui	" "	11,000
Koirao	" "	15,000

It will be understood that the figures given above are merely estimates. Kapui Naga is said to be a transition language between Bodo and Angami, and Koirao is akin to it. The other six are allied both to Angami Naga and to Kuki. What little is known about the languages of Manipur will be found in Vol. III, Part II of the Linguistic Survey of India by Dr. G. A. Grierson. Meithei or ordinary Manipuri belongs to the Kuki Chin group of languages and is described at length in Vol. III, Part III of Dr. Grierson's work. Unlike most of the languages on the North East Frontier, it had a written character of its own, but this has been to a great extent displaced by the Bengali alphabet.

Caste. The caste rules of Manipur differ very materially from those in force in the Surma Valley or Bengal. At the head of the community come the Brahmans, who were originally, no doubt, descended from immigrants from the west, though the custom which permits them to intermarry with Kshattriya women without losing caste must have by now effected a thorough fusion of the blood. The great bulk of the Manipuris call themselves

Kshattriya and wear the sacred thread, but they do not apparently lay claim to a western origin. At the bottom of the social scale come the Haris who were originally sweepers, though they no longer perform the needful but disgusting functions of their caste.

The Bishnupuriya Manipuris almost form a separate caste, and are said to be the descendants of 120 Hindu families of different castes, who were brought into the valley by Gharib Nawaz in the latter half of the eighteenth century to teach the indigenous inhabitants of the valley the customs of the Hindus. They intermarried with the people of the country, but after a time the Meithei, or original Manipuri race, came to the conclusion that the new-comers were of inferior stock, and they are now regarded with a certain measure of contempt. Both parties style themselves Kshattriyas, and in Manipur intermarry with one another. In the Surma Valley the distinction is more rigidly observed, and intermarriage is not generally allowed. According to another version they are Manipuris who came from Lakhipur in Cachar with a *salagram* called Bishnu, which is thought to be possessed of peculiar sanctity. Marjit took it with him in his flight to Cachar, and the party that brought it back across the hills first stopped at Bishenpur where the path descends from the Laimatol into the plain. They were then sent to Ningtho kong, and the duty of providing grass for the Raja's stable was entrusted to them. Another story says that they are the illegitimate descendants of a Manipuri Raja who stayed some time at Ningtho kong. Both of these legends fail to account for the undoubted physiological differences between

The Bishnu-
puriya Mani-
puris.

Bishnupuriya and other Manipuris, or for the slightly inferior position which they hold.

The Lairikyembum and Maiangs.

Another class are the Lairikyembum or writers, the descendants of families who probably originally came to Manipur as clerks. They do not wear the sacred thread and still retain the Bengali titles Basu and Das, but in other respects have now been absorbed into the general mass of the Manipuri population. The Maiangs are immigrants from the west but they are allowed the *jus connubii* by the Meithei, provided that they conform to ordinary Manipuri custom.

The Lois.

The Lois are thus described by Dr. Brown :—*

“The Loi is not recognised as a pure Manipuri; they appear to be descendants of the former inhabitants of Moirang, one of the original tribes which formerly occupied the valley to the south. They were formerly independent, but were reduced ages ago by the Meithei: hence the name Loi or subdued which was given them after their subjection. They profess to be Hindus, but are not recognised as such by the orthodox. The Loi caste seems a sort of limbo for non-descripts of all descriptions. Manipuris are frequently degraded to Loi as a punishment: in this case, should it not be remitted, which it usually is after a time, the punishment descends to the wife and family of the culprit who become Lois. All descendants of people of low caste, other than Mussalmans, seem to be consigned to the Lois. They are, perhaps, the most hardworking and useful class of people in the valley. All the men are employed in salt-making. Silk manufacture and fishing belong to this class. The Lois appear to have a separate language. One village of them, called Sengmai, speak a language only understood by themselves: this language is said to have an affinity with the Burmese. Amongst the Lois are a section chiefly engaged as fishermen on the Loktak lake, who do not perform lalloop but pay tribute to the Raja. This most probably arose from the necessity of having no risk of the supply of fish, which forms the staple food of the people, being intermittent. This branch of the Lois is called ‘Sel Loi’ (Sel,

* Pages 39 and 40.

the bell metal coin of the country). They consist of about 250 families, and each family has to pay a tax of about Rs. 2-4-0 monthly. This seems a very severe tax, considering the poverty of the country, but I am informed that they occasionally make large hauls of fish, which they are allowed freely to dispose of without any restriction; also that in bad seasons the amount of tribute is reduced. McCulloch says (account page 13):—‘Of the Lois in the valley, the Sel Loi is considered the lowest.’ This is not confirmed by the Manipuris, who state that the Sel Loi is considered rather a good class among themselves. There is a village to the south of the valley, named Shugunu, and containing about three or four hundred people who are descendants of Manipuris formerly reduced to the Loi caste. They are chiefly employed as wood-cutters and house-builders.”

Three thousand six hundred and eighteen persons described themselves as Loi at the last census.

The following twenty-six functioned groups are mentioned by Dr. Brown.* Functional Groups.

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----|--|
| 1. Ningthan Selba | ... | Raja's body and house servants. |
| 2. Lima Selba | ... | Ranee's body and house servants. |
| 3. Maiba Sunglei | ... | Act as Kabirajes or medical Practitioners. |
| 4. Paga | ... | Court of justice for women. |
| 5. Pena Kongba | ... | Musicians and singers. |
| 6. Sagong sung | ... | Overseers of the royal stables. |
| 7. Samoo sung | ... | Overseers of elephants. |
| 8. Arangba | ... | Butlers. |
| 9. Thangja panaba | ... | Overseers of black-smiths. |
| 10. Boladeb Seina | ... | Overseers of firewood. |
| 11. Phauroogba | ... | Overseers of rice. |
| 12. Toomjaroongba | ... | Overseers of salt. |
| 13. Poogay | ... | Charge of money-chest. |
| 14. Maiba tal | ... | Strike the gongs. |

* Page 39.

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|-----|---------------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 15. | Dulai baba | ... | Chaprasis and messengers. |
| 16. | Apalba | ... | Mounted troops. |
| 17. | Sebok achamba | ... | Raja's sword-bearers. |
| 18. | Oosaaba | ... | Carpenters. |
| 19. | Lauroongba | ... | Cultivators. |
| 20. | Thangjaba | ... | Working blacksmiths. |
| 21. | Konyoung | ... | Jewellers and workers in brass. |
| 22. | Koodumba | ... | Bone-setters. |
| 23. | Ahaiba | ... | Metal-casters. |
| 24. | Sunglel | ... | Cutchery work. |
| 25. | Sungooba | ... | Cutchery work. |
| 26. | Lai kai | ... | House-builders. |

Other sections are the Phoongnai and Potsungba, who were originally the Raja's slaves, and the Ayokpa and Kei, who are converted Nagas. These seem, however, to be mere functional groups, which can intermarry and eat with one another, whose very names will probably be forgotten, now that the lalup system on which they were based has been abolished. The Manipuris are further divided into different sections called *Imnak*, some of which are debarred from intermarriage with others. The whole caste system of Manipur is, however, of comparatively recent growth, and there has not yet been time for the development of the excrescences and deformities which, in places like Bengal, have completely obscured the intentions of its founders. Even a Naga can become a Kshattriya and adopt the sacred thread, and in the second generation will be accepted as a full Hindu, and the religion and caste system of the Manipuris is thus a curious mixture of laxity and formalism.

Rajkumars.

Some reference must now be made to the Rajkumars

though they are a caste in the sense in which that word is used in England, and not a caste as Hindus ordinarily understand that term. They are the descendants of the various Rajas of Manipur. Owing to the prevalence of revolutions there were many Rajas in the State, and as each Raja was generally a man of catholic heart, the total number of their descendants is extremely large. Prior to 1891, they were to some extent regarded as a privileged class, but even then many of them had sunk to the position of ordinary villagers. At the present day, the ordinary Rajkumar is a man of no influence or dignity, and is often an idle, discontented fellow, who would rather live by his wits than turn his hand to honest work. The custom with regard to royal marriages is, by the way, the exact converse of that which prevails in Europe, as the Raja, far from being prohibited from marrying a commoner, is not allowed to marry a Rajakumari.

The ordinary Manipuri is by no means an uncomely Physical Appearance. person. The men are tall, well built, and muscular, and do not generally run to fat. The complexion is usually fair, and the features often regular. In some the Mongolian strain is very marked, in others the finely-chiselled nose and well-set eyes suggest a completely different origin. Many of the Nagas too have regular features which do not in any way recall the Mongolian or Dravidian stock.

From certain points of view there is much that is Moral Characteristics. attractive about the Manipuris. They are clean and neat, dress themselves well, and live in excellent houses. Men and women alike are clever workmen, and they are fairly

ready to adopt new fashions. The women are shrewd and quick, and, though quiet enough in their manner, have none of that false modesty which seems so objectionable to European eyes. All this is fair enough but there is another side to the shield. Honour, even the honour that prevails amongst thieves, seems to be absolutely unknown to them. Their history is a painful record of feuds in which brother all too often met his death at his brother's hands. The patriarchal instinct is non-existent. There is no head of the family or clan round which the other members rally; *chacun pour soi* is the motto of all. Loyalty seems unknown. When a man is in power his fellows cringe before him; deprive him of his office and they spurn him. Calm and even-tempered they are generally cowards, though now and again displaying reckless courage. Their views with regard to the relations between the sexes are extremely lax. The man has to a great extent divested himself of the responsibility of providing for his children, and the question of their exact paternity is thus no longer a matter of vital interest. Most married women are said to have a paramour, most married men a mistress, and as long as there is no open scandal, the husband winks at his wife's diversions. The Manipuris seem to have little capacity for affection and it is dangerous to trust or rely on them in any way.

The hill
tribes.

The hill tribes fall into two main divisions, the Nagas and the Kukis. The Nagas numbered altogether in 1901 some 59,000 souls and are sub-divided into different tribes. Details for the population of each tribe in 1901 are unfortunately not forthcoming, and those

for 1881 are only estimates. The following figures are given by Captain Dun in his Gazetteer of Manipur* :—

Tankul and Lahupa	...	...	32,952.
Koirao (Mao Maram)	...	...	17,992.
Kaupui (Kapui)...	...	...	8,476.
Maring	...	...	484.

It is unnecessary to describe the manners and customs of these hill tribes here, as the whole subject is treated at length in the monographs which are now under preparation by Mr. Hodson. The Tankuls or Lahupas occupy the eastern hills. The men shave the hair on either side of the head and let it grow in a short stubble down the centre of the skull like a cock's comb, a curious custom which enables them to be distinguished at a glance from other hillmen. To the north the Tankuls carve out the hill sides into terraces on which they grow transplanted rice. To the south they follow the ordinary migratory system of cultivation known as *jhum*. The Koirao or Mao-Maram Nagas live in the north-west of the State, and closely resemble the Angami Nagas who adjoin them on the north. They wear the Angami kilt and grow their rice on terraces cut along the side of the hills. The Kapui Nagas occupy the hills between Cachar and Manipur. They sow their rice broadcast over the hills like most hill tribes, and are small men with no great muscular development. The men part and brush their hair with a neatness quite unusual in the ordinary savage, and plaster it down with grease till it shines again. The

* Page 28.

toilet is completed by a Grecian fillet round the head, and the general effect is not unpleasing. Many of these Nagas are handsome men with regular features and Grecian noses, and have very little trace of the Mongolian in their physiognomy. Their houses have practically no walls, the roof, which is of a V shaped pattern, reaching to the ground on either side. The Marings are a small tribe who live to the south of the Tankul Nagas. They also are *jhum* cultivators, but, as they have comparatively little land, they are compelled to husband their resources. They are unable to shift their fields from year to year, so they cut an elaborate system of drains along the face of the hill, and thus check to some extent the tendency of the rain-water to carry off the surface soil. Like the Daflas they let their hair grow long and then coil it up into a knot over the forehead. The Aimols are another small Naga clan who live south of the Marings.

The Kukis.

The Kukis live in the southern hills, and are pushing their villages into the Kapui country on the west and the Tankul country on the east. They are divided into two sections "old" and "new," and entered Manipur from the south, driven on by the great northward movement of the tribes which landed the Lushais in the hills that bear their name. They are divided into different clans called after the chief who was the original founder. The best known clans amongst the new Kukis are the Thado, Vungson, Changsen, Shingsol, Mangvung, Khlangam, Chungloe, Changput, Haukib, Simmte, and Kamhau. The old Kuki clans are the Kom, Anal, Namfau, Chim, Koireng, Chohte, Purum,

Mantak, and Hiroi. The Kukis are *jhum* cultivators and, as has been already seen, are the most turbulent of the hill tribes in Manipur. Other minor tribes are the Kom and Koirang who occupy the hills that overhang the valley near Moirang, and the Chirus who live in the hills to the west and south of the valley.

In 1901, 60 per cent. of the population of the State described themselves as Hindus, 86 per cent. were animistic tribes, and nearly 4 per cent. Muhammadans. The Manipuris, like most new converts, are full of zeal for their religion. They are much under the influence of their priests, and in every Brahman's house in Imphal town there is a neat building used as a shrine for the presiding deity, and an open shed (*mandap*) where the villagers assemble for *sankirtan*, the songs and hymns which form so large a part in the ritual of the Vaishnavites. The houses of these Brahmans can be easily distinguished, as all round the shrine flags of white cloth cut into strange devices flutter from tall bamboos. The profane foot of a European must not enter even the compound of a Brahman, and, if he so much as steps on to the verandah of an ordinary villager, the house will be instantly abandoned and another erected in its place. The people abstain from liquor and intoxicating drugs, and will not touch animal food of any kind. The tulsi plant is carefully cultivated in the centre of each compound, and they are most particular with regard to the application of the *tilak* or mark which is peculiar to the Vaishnavites. At the same time they are free from those unwholesome ideas with regard to the treatment of their womenkind which have infected the Hinduism of

Religion :
Hinduism.

Bengal, and which are entirely opposed to what is known of the customs of the early Aryans. Early marriage and the purdah are unknown, and the Manipuri women enjoy fully as much freedom as their sisters in the hills. The rules of caste are also much relaxed. If a Manipuri Brahman marries a woman of a lower caste, their children still are Brahmans, while, still more wonderful, if a Brahman woman marries beneath her, she simply sinks to the position of her husband. There is no prejudice too against the sale of fish, an occupation which amongst most Hindus is restricted to the humblest castes, and even Brahman women are not above retailing this article of food in the bazar. On the other hand the Brahmans will not, as a rule, take water drawn by members of any other castes, though an exception is made in favour of a certain family of well-born Kshattriyas who act as water-carriers for the Raja. Like all good Vaishnavites the principal deity whom they adore is Krishna, who is worshipped under the name of Gobindji.

The new and
the old
Brahmans.

The nomination of the present Raja to the throne gave rise to some ill-feeling amongst the Manipuri Brahmans. The causes and consequences of this dispute were thus described in the Report submitted by the Political Agent for the year 1895-96.

"The dispute took its origin with the nomination of the present minor Raja to the Gaddi. He is a descendant (great-grandson) of a former Raja of Manipur, named Nur Singh, and when he and his family came into the possession of the idol Gobind, which is the god of the reigning Manipur Prince, the family priests or Brahmans were preferred to the Royal temple, and the former Brahmans who officiated in the post in continuity, with one short exception, since Manipur history takes count,

were dismissed. The latter became known as *Aribas*, and the new Brahmans as *Anoubas*, the distinguishing words meaning "old" and "new" respectively. The *Aribas* having held office under the royal patronage for so many years, were in the great majority; and naturally their disciples were in overwhelming numbers, as compared with the followers of the *Anoubas*. Notwithstanding this fact, the *Anoubas* were in a position to cause much trouble, for, as stated above, they were in possession of the Royal temple and its resident idol Gobind, and by the persons who were for this reason excluded from the religious observances at the temple, the disappointment was keenly felt. Then, again, the *Anoubas*, who for so many years had been passive, soon became aggressive, and every Manipuri village, large or small, throughout the valley was at once supplied with an *Anouba* Brahman from Imphal, whose chief aim was to wrest disciples from the opposition camp. Under the ordinary conditions of life, there would seem to be little or no harm in this action, but no better system of log-rolling disputes could be invented. Whatever may be the case in Hindu communities elsewhere, the Brahman priest among the Manipuris is a necessity, his services are always in request: at births, marriages, and deaths, at certain ages of the children, at feasts and holidays, at laying of foundation-stones, which in Manipur is the erection of the main posts of the new house, and on many other occasions the priest must attend. Without his presence all will not be well. Such being the state of society, party disputes on these important occasions are unseemly, and cause extreme irritation. Here family circles are large, and when the moment arrived for the call of a Brahman, there was generally some mischievous member ready to oppose the choice of the priest. In a family of almost all *Aribas*, i.e., the disciples of an *Ariba* Brahman, this troublesome person would raise the question of inviting an *Anouba*, and peace and calm were at an end. Until the matter was settled by a competent authority, a marriage had to be postponed, or even a dead body had to wait removal to the funeral pyre.

It is said that this troublesome dispute has at last been closed.

There are seven principal temples in the town Temples. of Imphal which are consecrated to Gobindji, Brindaban Chandra, Senamahi, Nityananda, Bijoy Gobinda, Ramji, Mahabali, and Kamakhya. The first two of these

temples are situated in the Rajbari, and all, except the last two, are mere temporary structures made of timber, bamboo, and thatch. Mahabali's temple is a small masonry building, and is better known for the grove by which it is surrounded, which is inhabited by swarms of monkeys who are regularly fed by the presiding priest, and for whose maintenance a monthly allowance of ten maunds of rice is given by the State. The shrine of Kamakhya is merely a roof supported on posts above the image. Prior to the disturbances of 1891 there were seven masonry temples in the town, but they lost their sanctity during the fighting that took place, and some of them have been since diverted to secular uses. The principal temple to Gobindji stands opposite to the old palace site, and consists of a square building with a porch supported on masonry pillars. In front of this porch there is an arcade, flanked with a square tower on either hand, in which nautches used formerly to be held. Another fine temple is the one which was dedicated to Brindaban Chandra. It is built in the form of a square tower, and was captured and held by the British troops during the fighting that took place in 1891.

Muhamma-
dans.

The Muhammadans of Manipur are, according to Brown,* the descendants of immigrants from the Surma Valley who married Manipuri women. Their ranks were further swelled by marriages between the female descendants of these people and Manipuris, at a time when the views on this subject were not so rigid as they are at the present day. Their maulavis are Manipuris, who have

* Page 41.

been sent to Cachar to be instructed in the principles of their faith by maulavis from Hindustan. They are said to be fairly well acquainted with the doctrines of their religion; they abstain from pork and bury their dead, but the rite of circumcision is only very imperfectly performed. There are no masonry mosques in the State, and foreign Muhammadans in Imphal have a separate maulavi of their own.

The religion of the hill tribes is of the usual animis- **Animism.**
tic type. They seem to have vague ideas of a future life, and attribute the troubles that beset them in their earthly career to the machinations of evil spirits whom they endeavour to propitiate. For a fuller account of this subject reference should be made to the monographs on the hill tribes by Mr. Hodson.

In 1901, there were eight Jains in the State who were **Other religions.**
merchants from Marwar, 145 Buddhists, most of whom were Nepalese, and 45 Christians. In 1894, a missionary came to Manipur and was allowed to make his headquarters at Ukrul amongst the Tankul Nagas. The people have not as yet shown any tendency to adopt the new faith, and, according to the census returns, there were only eight Native Christians in Manipur in 1901.

The occupations recorded at the last census were **Occupations.**
divided into no less than 520 different heads, details for which will be found in the second part of the Report on the Census of 1901. So elaborate a classification is, however, hardly suitable for a State like Manipur, and the figures would not repay detailed examination. No less than 37,504 women were shown as supported by the preparation of cotton cloth, but, though a very large

quantity of cotton cloth of different kinds is produced in Manipur, most of these women workers are the wives or daughters of petty farmers, and nearly all of them are dependent on the land for their support. There are various other industries in the State which are described in Chapter V, but they are generally followed as a means of livelihood subsidiary to and supplemental to agriculture, and it would be difficult to ascertain the number of people actually working at these occupations. In 1901 the people were divided into the following eight main orders: Government, 3,337 or 1 per cent.; Pasture and agriculture 207,265 or 73 per cent.; Personal services, 1,257 or 0·4 per cent.; Preparation and supply of material substances, 62,988 or 22 per cent.; Commerce, transport and storage, 2,907 or 1 per cent.; Professions, 4,882 or 2 per cent.; Unskilled labour, not agricultural, 864, or 0·8 per cent.; Means of subsistence independent of occupation, 965 or 0·8 per cent.

Games and
amusements.

Hockey on horseback is the national game of Manipur. According to one tradition the game was introduced by a Raja named Vakungba about 300 years ago, while others say that hockey was first played in the time of Gharib Nawaz in the latter half of the 18th century. In the Manipuri game there are seven players on each side: there are no goal posts, and a point is scored whenever the ball is hit across the back line of the opposing side. There are no rules against crossing or fouling, and, were it not for the size of the ponies used, serious accidents would be very common. The polo costume consists of a scanty dhuti well tucked up so that the thighs are almost bare, while the calves are protected by brightly

coloured woollen gaiters. The pony's bridle is adorned with big pompons of coloured cotton, and on either side of the saddle there are great curved shields of lacquered leather. The head of the stick is placed at an obtuse angle to the shaft, so that the players usually strike the ball while it is at a considerable distance to the right or left of the pony. A good Manipuri has an extraordinary command over the ball, and is also a great adept at dribbling. They have, however, very little idea of combination, and generally play an entirely selfish game. The Manipuris ride extremely light, and the pace which they succeed in knocking out of their tiny little ponies is most remarkable. Other outdoor sports are foot and boat-racing and wrestling which are thus described by Dr. Brown.*

This Lamchel is a competition between the different "Pannahs" or classes among the Manipuri population. The Brahmans, as also the lowest class of Manipuris, the Lois, are not allowed to compete, but Musalmans may. The distance run by the competitors is a straight course from the brick bridge formerly mentioned to the inside of the Raja's enclosure; the distance is under half a mile. The first of the races consists of trials of speed by two pannahs at a time: the winners in these races run again when all have had their trial, and the first man in of the whole wins the race of the year. The first man receives as his reward sundry presents, and is excused from all forced labour or lalloop for the rest of his life; he becomes a hanger-on about the Raja usually after his victory. Old winners are allowed to run again for the honour of the thing: when they win more than once, they get presents. The first in at the preliminary races between the Pannahs are allowed three months' exemption from lalloop. These races cause great competition, and for months before they come off, various lanky-looking men, with a scanty proportion of clothing, may be seen

Lumchel or
foot races.

morning and evening trotting along the roads, getting themselves into training for the important event.

The Raja is always present at these and the other games, seated in a sort of gateway which bounds the straight road along which the races are run.

Wrestling.

After the races there is an exhibition of wrestling: this presents nothing very peculiar; the only thing that need be mentioned regarding it is a curious custom that prevails. The victor over the wrestler who competes with him, before salaming to the Raja, leaps up in the air, alighting on his left foot; as he descends he gives his right buttock a resounding slap with his right hand: having thus asserted his superior skill he makes his salaam in the usual manner.

The Hee-yang or boat races.

The boat races occupy three days in September, and take place on the moat which surrounds on three sides the Raja's enclosure. This ditch is about 25 or 30 yards broad, and, at the season when the boat races come off, contains plenty of water. This festival is the most important held in Manipur, and great preparations are made for it; stands are erected on both sides of the moat, the one for the Raja being of considerable size and height. The women occupy stands on the opposite side of the moat. The boats used in the races are two in number, one of great length and hollowed out of a single tree; the rowers number about 70 men, each with a short paddle. Besides the rowers are several men attending to the steering, and urging on the crew. One of these stands in the front of the boat, and, leaning on his paddle, encourages the efforts of the men by stamping violently with his right foot at intervals. The race itself differs from most boat-races in the fact that here the great object is for the one boat to foul the other and bore it into the bank, so that one side of the boat is disabled, the men not being able to use their paddles; the boats are thus always close together until at the finish, when the race is usually won by a foot or two only: the distance paddled is about a quarter of a mile. Each race is rowed twice, whichever wins, and the results are carried on from year to year. As in the Lumchel, the competitors are men belonging to the different Pannaahs. There are no rewards for the races, they being rowed merely for the honour of the thing. The Raja in his boat, which is like the others, but ornamented with a carved deer's head and horns gilded at the prow, accompanies the race; the Raja on the chief race-day steering his own boat in the dress formerly alluded to. McCulloch mentions in his account that the boat-race is not a fair race but a struggle between the rowers on either side, in which those who can deal the hardest blows are usually the victors. That fights occasionally

happen is correct, but they arise from accidental causes and are really not a premeditated part of the performance. While the boats are paddling down to the starting-place, a good deal of chaffing, flinging of weeds, water, etc., between the rival boats takes place, but all seems to be conducted in a good-humoured manner."

The moat is now quite dry, and boat-races can only take place on the river when they are full of water in the rains.

The Manipuris are fond of cards and chess, but the most popular of all indoor games is *Kangsana*. The following description of this game and of the great Manipuri epic is taken from the Account of the Valley of Manipur by Major McCulloch* :—

"It is played only in the spring, the players being generally young women and girls, with usually a sprinkling of men on each side. The game seems to cause great excitement, and there is great emulation between the sides. The Kang is the seed of a creeper; it is nearly circular, about an inch and a half in diameter and about three-quarters of an inch thick. This is placed on the ground upright, at one time with its broad side towards the party by whom it is to be struck, at another edge-wise. When the Kang is placed with its broad side to the party, it is to be pitched at with an ivory disk; when it is placed edge-wise, it is to be struck by the disk propelled on its flat side along the surface of the ground by the force of the middle finger of the right acting off the forefinger of the left. A good player can propel the disk in this way with great force and precision. The side having most hits wins. The whole is closed by a feast at the expense of the losers. Conundrums are a fertile source of amusement. They appear usually far-fetched, and sometimes not over delicate. The tale of Khamba and Thoibee, sung by their *essiesukpa* or bards, never fails, with a popular singer, to rivet attention. The scene of this tale and the place where it was originally sung is Moirang. The hero and heroine are persons said to have flourished hundreds of

years ago. Thoibee is the daughter of the Moirang chief's brother. She loves Khamba, a lad poor in worldly riches, but rich in personal beauty, of good descent, great modesty, courage, strength and agility. Thoibee herself is a young lady of unsurpassed beauty, and Khamba having seen her by chance while boating on the Loktak, loves her at first sight. But the course of true love never yet ran smooth, and it was no exception with these lovers. A person named Kong Yangba saw Thoibee's love for Khamba, and wishing to gain her for himself, he used all the means that a powerful connection gave him to crush Khamba. The various perils through which Khamba has to pass, and the constancy of Thoibee, form the subject of the song. After having won his foot-race, speared his tiger, caught a wild bull, and been tied to the foot of an elephant, Khamba gains Thoibee, who also passed through various troubles. The end is tragical. Khamba doubts his wife, and wishing to try her fidelity, she, not knowing who he was, spears him. Having discovered what she had done, she spears herself. Some of the characters introduced in the story are very good. The constant repetition of this tale only seems to increase the desire to hear it."

Dances.

The Manipuris and Nagas are very fond of dancing. The steps are generally simple, and there is a good deal of circling about and wheeling in and out, the evolutions having some resemblance to those performed by a Greek chorus. The hands are almost invariably carried at the level of the shoulder, with the fingers pointing upwards. The orchestra consists of one or more drums and perhaps a string instrument or two, and the performers keep time to the music. In one of the nautches the dresses used are extremely bright and picturesque. The bodice is of emerald-green satin covered with silver sequins. The under-skirt is of scarlet cloth in which small pieces of looking-glass have been inserted to catch the light, the over-skirt of a silvery muslin. The Nagas too wear bright-coloured cloths at their dances, and strange ornaments on their heads,

while the men keep time to the music with bill-hooks in their hands.

The Manipuris burn their dead, but differ from other Hindus in placing them in an open coffin on the funeral pyre. The *sradh* ceremony, as is only natural amongst a people who are so completely under the influence of their priests, is a very heavy charge upon the next of kin. A *sankirtan* party is always in attendance, and people occasionally dissipate almost the whole of their property on gifts to the presiding priests. Ordinary Manipuris, as they claim to be Kshattriyas, celebrate the *sradh* on the thirteenth day after the death occurs.

Ceremonies
in connec-
tion with
death.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Rice—Irrigation and floods—Sugar-cane—Fibres—Other crops—Jhum and terraced cultivation—Live stock—Farm implements—Forests.

Agriculture: **Rice.** THE staple crop of the valley is rice, which falls into three main divisions: *lingba* or transplanted rice; *dumahi* or high land broadcast rice; and *daotubi* which is a form of *aman*. There are no crop statistics available, but it is thought that about 85 per cent. of the total area under rice is *lingba*, about 12 per cent. *dumahi*, while the comparatively insignificant remainder is *daotubi*.

Lingba or transplanted rice is first sown in little beds or nurseries. The land is broken up in April or May, is ploughed five or six times till the ground is reduced to a puddle, and is carefully manured with cowdung and sweepings. The size of the nursery varies with the area to be planted out, but generally stands to the rice-fields in the proportion of 1 to 16. The seed, which has been selected from the largest ears of the previous year's crop, is steeped in water for two or three days, allowed to germinate, and then sown

broadcast over the bed in May and June. It comes up a rich emerald green, and at the beginning of summer these patches of brightest green herbage are a striking feature in the rural landscape. In the meanwhile the fields are being got ready for the reception of the seedlings. The husbandman starts ploughing as soon as the soil is softened by the spring rain, and repeats the process from four to eight times till he has reduced the land to a rich puddle of mud. After the third ploughing the field is harrowed, and the little embankments, a few inches high, intended to retain the water are repaired. When the seedlings are about seven or eight weeks' old, they are taken from the nursery-bed and carried in large bundles to the field. Here they are planted out in handfuls, each of which contains four or five plants. The distance at which these are planted from one another depends upon the fertility of the soil, and upon whether the work is done towards the beginning or end of the season. Transplanting goes on from the beginning of July to the middle of August. The work is of a most arduous description and involves stooping for hours in a field of liquid mud, but the Manipuris believe in the principle of co-operation. The bachelors and unmarried girls in the village combine to plant out the different little holdings, and with their songs and laughter strive to turn a tedious duty into an occasion of much fun and merriment. In places where the water lies too deep to allow of the plants being properly transplanted, the seed is scattered broadcast and sinks to the bottom and takes root. Before the end of the rains the crop is fully grown, though the ears are still empty; but about

the beginning of October they begin to fill and the field to turn to a rich yellow. From the middle of November to the middle of December harvesting is going on. The work is carried out by men and women alike. The plants are cut off close to the earth, and left in the fields for a few days to dry. When they are ready the grain is threshed out on a big mat. While the threshing is going on, song are sung, and prayers are offered up to God begging him to increase the produce of the fields. The grain is then carried home in baskets and stored in large bins made of bamboo mats. The richer men keep their rice in separate granaries, which are raised well above the ground from fear of damp. The straw is not wasted, as is usual in Assam, but is stacked and used as fodder for the cattle.

**Dumahi and
Daotubi.**

Dumahi is grown on land which is too high for transplanted paddy. Ploughing begins in May and is repeated six or seven times. The seed is sown broadcast in June; and the crop is harvested in September. No *ails* are thrown up to retain the water, and very little weeding is done. *Daotubi* is sown broadcast about the end of June, and ripens about the beginning of December. It is grown in every part of the valley in the low land that surrounds a *bil*, but the total area under this crop is comparatively small.

**Irrigation
and floods.**

The people are fully alive to the advantages of irrigation, and, near the foot of the hills, carry the water of the hill streams to their fields. In the lower part of the valley channels are often dug to bring the water from the rivers on to the land. This system of irrigation does not, however, render them independent of the

rainfall, as, if the rivers are low, the water does not enter these channels; and a dry season in Manipur often means a short crop. Floods occasionally do damage, and the sections of the rivers passing through Imphal *panna* are protected by embankments. In 1898, there was a serious flood. No less than 89 inches of rain fell in the two months of May and June; the river bunds were breached, and the polo ground went several feet under water. Deer and pig also injure the crop, especially in the southern part of the valley near the Loktak, and, if the weather is too damp and cloudy, insects attack the plants and sometimes do much damage. There are many different kinds of rice, but the following are the six best grades, ranged in the order of merit: *kumbhi*, *foiel*, *noin-ing*, *gobinda bhog*, *laikhuram foi*, and *chahow*.

The only variety of sugarcane raised in Manipur Sugarcane. has a hard red stem and is known as *chu*. A small patch of cane is often to be seen within the high mud walls that enclose the Manipuri homestead, but the total area under sugar is probably not large. The crop is propagated from the tops of the best canes which are cut off at harvest time and kept in a shady place. One of these tops yields on the average about five canes, and as they contain but little juice, the cultivator does not sacrifice much of the gross product of his fields in the cause of reproduction. The land is hoed up till it is reduced to a fine tilth, and the tops planted in trenches between April and June. While the crop is growing it is continually hoed and weeded, and about August the leaves should be tied up round each cluster of canes, though this troublesome precaution is occasionally neglected. The earth

from the ridges is heaped about the roots to strengthen their hold upon the soil, and this process is continued until the relative positions of ridge and trench are reversed, and the canes stand upon the ridges with trenches in between.

**Preparation
of molasses.**

The cane is pressed in the old-fashioned wooden mill. This consists of two wooden rollers fixed side by side in a trough hollowed out of a heavy block of wood. The tops of the two rollers pass through a hollow beam supported by uprights let through the lower block of wood into the ground, and are cut into the form of screws which fit into one another. To one of these rollers is affixed a pole which is driven round in a circle, and thus causes the rollers to revolve. The motive power is usually supplied by bullocks or buffaloes, and occasionally by the villagers themselves. The mill requires rather more knowledge of carpentry for its production than the other implements of agriculture and can only be made by the more skilful of the villagers. The cane is placed between the rollers and crushed as it is slowly forced through. Each handful is passed through the mill three or four times till nothing but foam appears. The juice trickles from the trough into the earthen pot or kerosine-oil tin placed in a hole below it, and from thence is transferred to a large earthenware vessel. It is boiled over a furnace dug in the ground, with two holes in the top for the reception of iron cauldrons. The Manipuris only boil the juice till it attains the consistency of treacle, and eat or sell it in this condition; but the Musalmans continue the process till it turns into thick molasses. A few iron Bihia mills have been

introduced into the State, but they are rather heavy to transport, and as the area of any given patch of cane is small, this is a serious drawback.

Very little jute is raised in Manipur, and the only ^{Fibres.} fibre of importance is cotton, which is extensively cultivated by the hill tribes, and is sometimes grown on the low hills in the valley. It is generally sown in *jhums* from which a crop of rice was taken in the previous year. The ground is hoed up and the seed sown in February or March. The fields are weeded in April and May, and the cotton plucked in September and October. There are three flushes of which the second is the best. Heavy rain injures the crop and a hailstorm sometimes destroys it altogether.

The other crops grown in Manipur are of little im- ^{Other crops.} portance from a commercial point of view. Mustard is sown inside the house enclosure or on the high land in the neighbourhood. A little *til* is also grown, but the total quantity exported is quite insignificant. Matikalai, which furnishes the staple kind of *dal* used by the people, peas, chillies, cabbages, and other kinds of vegetables are grown on high land. The Manipur potato is a small red tuber, but the Naini Tal varieties which have recently been introduced at Kangjupkul are doing well. Oats and wheat have been tried and proved successful. When an *atta*-eating regiment was stationed in the valley, the Manipuris grew a considerable quantity of wheat, and foreigners set up water-mills to convert it into flour; but on its relief by a Gurkha regiment the people were left without a market for their grain, and the area under wheat again sank to a very small figure. Of plantains

there are seven or eight varieties but none are of good quality. The trees die down in the winter time, and in March are cut away, to allow a new shoot to spring up from the old stock. The areca nut will not grow in the valley, and the pan vine (*piper betle*) has unusually small leaves. A larger variety of pan is, however, grown in the valleys that intersect the hills. The plants are trained-up trees, as is the custom in the Assam valley, and are not grown in enclosed gardens after the fashion followed by the Baruis of Bengal. When the soil and climate are favourable pan is an extraordinarily profitable crop, and some Naga villages in the valleys of the Barak and Irang are said to make as much as Rs. 200 per house per annum from pan alone. Oranges, pine-apples, and jack fruit thrive in the valley, but limes do not do well. Mangoes blossom and fruit luxuriantly, but the worm which ruins this fruit in Assam does not spare it in Manipur. There are, however, a few late-bearing trees and they yield excellent fruit. Various kinds of English fruit trees have been tried but so far have not proved particularly successful.

Tobacco.

Tobacco is cultivated as a garden crop. The seedlings are raised in carefully-manured beds in August and September. At the beginning of November they are transplanted into ground which has been reduced to a fine tilth, and protected from the sun by little sections of the plantain trunk. The bed is lightly hoed up two or three times, and not more than ten or twelve leaves are allowed to grow on each plant, the remainder being picked off as they appear. The leaves are gathered in February and March, and there is a second but

much inferior crop about two months later. If required for chewing they are dried under a shed, or else pressed into a hollow bamboo and allowed to ferment. When the tobacco is destined for the pipe, the leaves are piled up in heaps till they ferment, cut up and mixed with molasses, and are then ready for the hookah.

The ordinary methods of cultivation practised in the hills is the system known as *jhum*. The jungle growing on the hill side is cut down and burned between January and March. The seeds of hill rice, millet, and Job's tears are dibbled in amongst the ashes, and while the crop is growing it is weeded once or twice. The millet is harvested in July, the rice in November, and the Job's tears in the following months. Chillies, pumpkins, and *til* are also grown in the *jhums*, and cotton is a very important crop.

Cultivation
in the hills.
The *jhum*.

The system of *jhum* cultivation has many drawbacks. The crop is entirely dependent on the rainfall for the moisture it requires to bring it to maturity, much time and trouble has to be expended in the clearing of the *jhums*, and the amount of land required is very large. A *jhum* is, as a rule, only cultivated for two seasons in succession, and then allowed to fallow for seven or eight years. After the second year the yield falls off and the weeds spring up and choke the crop. There is a risk too that the roots of the scrub jungle may be killed, and the land depends to some extent for its fertility on the growth of this young jungle and its subsequent conversion into a bed of ash manure. A village thus requires of culturable land about five times the area actually under cultivation at any given time, and the outlying *jhums* of large

communities must of necessity be sometimes situated at a considerable distance from the village site.

The terraced cultivation of the Mao-Maram and Tankul Nagas.

A *jhum*, with crops springing up amongst the ashes and the charred stumps of the trees, is undoubtedly a primitive form of cultivation, which is only possible in a very sparsely peopled country. The terraced cultivation of the Mao-Maram and Tankul Nagas discloses a capacity for continuous and sustained hard work which is seldom found in a community of semi-savages. The slopes of the hills below their villages are cut out into a succession of terraces, which are irrigated from the hill streams, whose water is carefully distributed through little channels over every step in the series. Where the slope is fairly gentle, these terraces are sometimes nearly twenty yards in breadth and not more than two feet high, but fields as large as this are by no means common. The average terrace is more than three feet high and is not more than three or four yards wide, and is often built up with stone retaining walls. In places these stone walls are as much as five feet high, in places the terraces are not more than two feet wide, and, as they have to follow the contour of the hill side, they are never of any considerable length.

An ample supply of water is an absolute necessity for terraced cultivation, and, where this is to be had, fields are cut out on slopes which are almost precipitous in their steepness. Sometimes the terraces are simply cut out of the earth and are not faced with stone. The initial labour required to make these terraced fields is very great, but once made they give less trouble than a *jhum*. They are close to the village site, jungle clearing

and weeding are not necessary, and where they are irrigated from perennial springs the crop is absolutely sure and is not affected by variations in the rainfall. *Jhum* rice also does not do well at elevations of more than 4,000 feet above the sea, and, were it not for their terraces, many of the Mao-Maram Nagas would have to subsist on millet and Job's tears. This irrigated rice is raised in the same way as the *sali-dhan* of Assam. The soil is thoroughly saturated with moisture and then hoed up till it is reduced to a rich puddle. The rice has in the meanwhile been sown on the hill side, and, when the plants are from a month to six weeks' old, they are transplanted into the fields. Harvesting goes on in December, and the ears are cut off short by the head and threshed in the field before being carried up to the village.

The cattle are strong, hardy, little animals much Livestock. superior to the cattle of the Surma Valley or Assam. They are probably akin to the Burmese breed, as the best animals are said to come from Kakchingkunao at the southern end of the valley. A bull costs from Rs. 15 to Rs. 80, a bullock from Rs. 25 to Rs. 85, and a cow from Rs. 15 to Rs. 25. Some of the best cows are said to yield as much as three or four seers of milk. The buffaloes are also very fine animals and are used to drag the plough as well as for dairy purposes. Considerable herds of them are kept by Nepalese settlers at the northern end of the valley, and a special reserve has recently been set apart for these herdsmen in the Khoga Valley south of Moirang, to avoid the endless disputes which have been caused by the animals damaging the crops, when

graziers were allowed to settle in the neighbourhood of villages. Grazing fees are levied on foreign herdsmen at the rate of annas 8 for each buffalo and annas 4 for each smaller head of horned cattle. Cow buffaloes can be purchased near Kanglatombi for from Rs. 85 to Rs. 50, while a bull costs rather less. In the centre of the valley the prices are a little higher. Both cattle and buffaloes find a ready sale in Cachar, when exported to that district, and the sturdy little breed of bullocks has done much to develop the export trade along the cart road to Assam. The cattle are grazed in swamps and on the hills, and sometimes on rice straw, and there is not, as a rule, any dearth of suitable pasture. The Lamphel and Taiel *bils* near Imphal have been specially reserved as grazing grounds. Goats are not numerous, and the only sheep in Manipur are a few that are kept for the consumption of the European residents. Poultry, like most other living things, do very well in Manipur. A really first-class Manipuri pony is a splendid little creature, but good animals are unfortunately very rare. They are generally below twelve hands in height, but they have remarkable speed, courage, and endurance, and will carry a heavy man for many miles over rough or hilly country. Under native rule no attempt was made to regulate the breeding of the ponies; a good animal was generally appropriated for the Raja's stable, and, even as long ago as 1859, McCulloch wrote that the genuine Manipuri horse had nearly disappeared. In 1889, the Raja was presented with an Arab stallion and eight mares, but Arabs cannot thrive in the damp climate of Manipur, and the imported stock died out. At present

there are two stallions kept by the State, one a Burmese and one a small Australian.

The farm implements, as in the rest of the Province, <sup>Farm imple-
ments.</sup> are simple and inexpensive. The plough consists of a curved piece of wood, the front of which is shod with iron, fitted with a pole when drawn by a pair of bullocks, or a pair of shafts if intended for a buffalo. The harrow is a long-toothed rake drawn over the fields by a bullock, though sometimes its place is taken by a heavy log, which presses down weeds and rice alike. The rice springs up again on the following day, but the weeds droop and die. The hoe that is used to trim the *aills* in the paddy fields has a long but very narrow blade. The *charuing* or flail is like a wooden fork, with the handle bent at an angle of about 120 degrees. The handle is about 27 inches long, the prongs of the fork about 26. When the *dhan* has been threshed it is thrown into the air from a long-handled wooden shovel (*pho in cho*) and winnowed with a mat. It is then placed in large baskets and dragged to the homestead on a wheel-less sledge. For husking grain the Manipuris follow the fashion prevalent in the hills, and use a pestle and mortar instead of the *dhenki* of the Assam Valley.

The following account of the forests of Manipur is ^{Forests.} reproduced from the Gazetteer of Captain Dun:—

"The whole of the hill ranges lying between the valleys of Cachar and Manipur, and far to the north and south, are densely clothed to their summits with tree-jungle. Almost the only exception to this has been already stated in the description of the Manipur Valley, and refers to the hill slopes facing it. These slopes have been steadily cleared of their timber, and present a denuded appearance. The tree-forest presents a great variety; and in the ranges lying west of the Manipur

Valley there are large forest tracts of trees comprising Nagesar, Jarul, India-rubber, Tun, Oak, Ash, etc. Fir trees do not exist in the hills immediately adjoining the Cachar road.

Bamboo of the commoner kinds is plentiful between Cachar and Manipur. On the higher ranges to the north ringals and thorny bamboos are found. Round all the villages in the north-east portion of the hill territory the giant variety is grown, but is not common in other parts of the State.

In the Yomadung range, lying between Burma and Manipur, the jungle is much more open, very large trees are rarer than either towards the west or north, and the bamboo is confined to the low-lying ground and ravines. Fir trees are occasionally seen, but are not plentiful. The tea-plant is found in this range, and apparently spreads over a large area. Teak is common to the slope overlooking the Kubo Valley. The cinchona would most likely grow well on the slopes of the hills, especially those lying nearest to the Manipur valley and in the Hirok range. The tea-plant is common in the hills to the north. The only part of the immense forest tracts which are utilised are those of the Jiri forest and the hill slopes lying nearest to the valley. From the hills to the south of the valley, most of the wood used in building is obtained; some of the varieties are said to be proof against the ravages of the white-ant. From a tree found to the north-east in the hills in considerable numbers, a black resinous fluid is obtained, which is used for japanning by the Manipuris. The fir tree is found to be highly resinous, and the trees are of large size. Near the salt wells to the north-east of the valley, on the first low range of hills rising from it are numerous clumps of firs. To the south, the fir is plentiful. Palm trees are found in the eastern slope of the Yomadung range, near Tammu in Burma, where a few supari trees grow; on the Kaopum peak and the Nunjaibong range, where the fan palm is plentiful; and all over the hills on the north and east, where a kind of palmetto is common.

The wood most in request among the Manipuris is one they call U-ningthau. Wild apricot, plum, apple, and pear are common both in the valley and on the hills, and the willow is found in many places in the north.

The Somra basin and the valley to the north of it contain magnificent forests of the *Pinus longifolia*.

The red rhododendron is found all over the hills to the north and a white-flowered kind is found in a few places.

Perhaps the commonest tree about Mao and the southern spurs from Khunho is a tree which both in leaf, fruit, and habitat closely resembles the alder."

The forests between Cachar and the Manipur Valley are managed by the Forest Officer of Cachar, 25 per cent. of the gross receipts being retained by Government on account of management charges. The trees are felled by Nagas, Kukis, Kacharis and Mahimals, and dragged by elephants to the nearest navigable river, down which they are floated to a check station in Cachar. The timber finds a ready market in the Surma Valley. The following trees are exported in considerable quantities : Nagesvar (*mesua ferrea*), jarul (*lagerstraemia flos reginae*), gundroi (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*), rata (*dysoxylum binectariferum*), kurta (*isonandra polyantha*), poma (*cedrela toona*), joki (*bischoffia javanica*) tailo (*castanopsis indica*), sundi, karal (*dipterocarpus sp.*), jam (*schima mollis*), ping (*cynometra polyandra*), cham (*artocarpus chaplasha*), tula, bora, ramdal, haludchaki, gomari (*gmelina arborea*), jhalna (*terminalia bicolorata*), jinari (*podocarpus bracteata*), sutrang, caddum (*anthocephalus cadamba*), dumbhoil and moroi (*albizzia odoratissima*).

CHAPTER V.

INDUSTRIES.

Weaving—Silk—Working in metals—Leather work—Mats—Carpentering—Dyes—Salt—Iron—Limestone—Copper.

THE Manipuris are neat and clever work people, who supply most of their own wants, and much of the clothing used by the hillmen. Were it not for the isolation of the valley, which cuts its inhabitants off to a great extent from outside markets, they could largely add to their resources from their industries. The following is an account of the more important of them.

Weaving. Weaving is a most important industry in Manipur. The cotton employed is grown on the surrounding hills, is sold in the raw in considerable quantities at the various bazars situated in the valley, and is ginned and spun into thread by the women themselves. The processes of spinning, cleaning, and weaving are described at length in the Monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam printed at the office of the Superintendent of Government Printing, Calcutta, in 1897, but the accounts are far too long to admit of their reproduction here. Two kinds of loom are used, the ordinary four-poster loom of the Brahmaputra

Valley and the smaller kind that is used by the Bhutias and other hill tribes of Assam. Description of instruments and of mechanical processes of this nature are of little general interest, and are hardly intelligible unless accompanied by diagrams. Those curious in the matter would do well to consult the monograph to which reference has been already made, where the whole question is discussed in the minutest detail. The four-poster loom and the whole process of weaving is described on pages 80-49, and the smaller loom on pages 77 and 78.

The cloths produced are of excellent quality ^{Cotton} ~~Cloths.~~ and are extraordinarily cheap. Cotton cloth can be bought in the Imphal bazar for less than a half-penny a square foot.* The fabric is a little rough, as home-made fabrics usually are, but it is strong and stout, and weighs an ounce or a little more to the square foot. It is obvious that it would be impossible to produce hand-woven cloths at a profit at such rates with hired labour, but the industry is carried on by the women in their leisure hours, and even the smallest return above the actual cost of the materials is regarded as so much gained. The raw cotton has generally to be purchased, but apart from this there is absolutely no cash expenditure. The loom and other implements of the craft suffer from wear and tear, but the greater part of the loom is usually made at home. Dyed cloths are generally a little dearer, but do not show the dirt so soon, a quality which commends them

* The actual prices paid for two cloths purchased, for certainly not less than ruling rates, was '43 and '53 of a penny per square foot. The former cloth weighed 1oz. per square foot, the latter 1'2 oz.

to the native purchaser. The cotton fabrics offered for sale in the afternoon bazar include *faneks*, or women's frocks, of different colours, though the prevailing pattern is a narrow blue and white stripe, and *dhotis* and coats for men. There are shawls of every size, thickness, and colour, though white is the one most generally in request, and brightly-dyed rugs to catch the hillman's eye. Some of them are white, with red or blue and yellow stripes, some red and blue, and others checks and tartans. On other stalls will be found mosquito curtains and delicate muslin wraps which the women wear over their shoulders when in evening dress. A full list of the cotton fabrics produced in Manipur will be found in the monograph to which reference has been already made, (pages 151-168).

The Manipuri silk-worms are of two varieties, *hanjanbi* and *laimerol*, and differ both from the *pat*, *muga*, and *eri* of Assam and the *tussur* silk of Bengal. Both kinds are reared indoors and are fed on the leaves of the mulberry, or, failing that, on the leaves of two trees called by the Manipuris *wainu* and *lou*. The eggs of the *hanjanbi* take ten or twelve days to hatch, the caterpillar attains its full development in three weeks, when it is above $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, and another three days are required for the spinning of the cocoon. The moth hatches out after eight or nine days, and dies shortly after it has laid its eggs. The eggs of the *laimerol*, on the other hand, take nine or ten months to hatch, and the caterpillar two months more to attain to its full growth, when it is about three inches long. The latter variety can only yield one brood in the year, while the former gives some eight or nine,

as it does not breed during the three winter months. The silk of the *laimerol* is, however, superior both in quantity and quality to that of the *hajanbi*. The cocoons are boiled and the thread is then reeled off. Three qualities are recognised. The first is called *muga rel* and fetches about Rs. 18 a seer; the second, *longiai*, sells for Rs. 7-8 a seer; and the third quality, *pangang*, is only Rs. 2 a seer. The worms are delicate and are liable to epidemic diseases which sometimes carry off the whole brood. The principal centres of the industry are Kameng, Khurkhul, Phoyeng, Limareng, Kattumngjan, and Sagalmong. The total annual output is roughly estimated at some sixteen maunds, practically all of which is disposed of locally. Proposals have recently been made by Messrs. Anderson Wright and Coy. of Calcutta for the establishment of the silk industry in Manipur on a commercial scale, but the question is still under the consideration of the Government. The people are intelligent and industrious, and extremely anxious to make money, and anything which would add to their supply of ready cash would add materially to their comfort and do much to facilitate the administration of the State. The silk cloths which were given by the Raja to those of his officers who distinguished themselves in battle are well known. The body is generally green or red, and along each side runs a narrow border of embroidery. At either end there is a deep and very handsome border of silk embroidery, and a fringe of silk. These shawls when new cost Rs. 85, but the colours are then a little crude, and the cloths, like wine, improve with keeping.

**Working in
metals.**

Brass and bell-metal utensils are manufactured in the State, but in the villages they are by no means in general use, and they are not as cheap as most of the commodities of Manipur. Blacksmiths make daos, knives, ploughshares, hoes, and other simple articles. Really artistic daggers with brass sheaths and brass-mounted hilts can be obtained in Imphal. Iron implements can, however, be purchased at Lakhipur in Cachar for far less than they can be manufactured in the valley, and the demand is to a great extent met by imports from this district.

**Stone
vessels.**

Vessels of limestone are made near Bishenpur. A piece of rock is fastened to a spindle which is put in motion by alternately pulling and relaxing a cord wound round it. As the stone revolves a sharp iron tool is pressed against it, and the bowl hollowed out and shaped. A good-sized vessel is sold for two annas, a sufficiently small return on the time and trouble expended.

**Leather
work.**

In the time of Raja Kirti Chandra Singh (1850-1886 A.D.) some Manipuris were sent to Cawnpur to be trained in leather work, and at one time they could tan and work up leather with some skill. The industry has now fallen into decay, and the Manipuris get their leather from foreign *mochis*, and apply a black varnish which is obtained from the juice of a tree called *yang* which grows near the Burmese frontier.

Jewellery.

There are said to be about 100 jewellers in Manipur, most of whom are members of the Kangbun, Torangbun, Koisam, and Kousam castes. The metal is obtained from Calcutta, and the articles prepared include necklaces, rings, bracelets and anklets, earrings, cups, dishes,

and pan cases and head ornaments. Manipuri jewellery is generally cheap and showy and often consists of baser metals overlaid with the thinnest washing of gold. Brass bracelets and armlets are also manufactured for the hill tribes.

The Manipuris are expert makers of different kinds Mat-making and baskets. of mats and baskets. The *kaunafak* which is used for sitting or sleeping is made from the *kauna* reed. The *iangdowfak* is a mat on which paddy is generally threshed and is made from *nal*. The *toufak* is also made from *nal*, and is a large mat which is used to make the bins in which paddy is stored. The *lah* and the *faklong* are two mats made of split bamboo. The same material is generally used for baskets, some of which are very neatly made, especially the *tappus* and *polans* or baskets in which the hill-men carry their loads.

The men are clever carpenters and will turn out ex- Carpentering, pottery, &c. cellent European furniture from a pattern. Neat carving is also done in horn and ivory, but these arts are at present in a very languishing condition owing to the absence of court patronage, though that perhaps is hardly the right term to use. The pottery of the country has not much to recommend it except its cheapness. Water jars and other vessels are manufactured, the principal centres of the industry being Chirel and Nangul. Good bricks are manufactured in the State, and excellent tiles were made by men who had received a lesson from the tile-makers of Upper India.

Various kinds of vegetable dyes are found in Mani- Dyes and dyeing. pur which are freely used by the inhabitants of the State. The best authority on the subject is a Monograph on

Dyes and Dyeing in Assam by Mr. W. A. M. Duncan, published at the Shillong printing office in 1896. A full description of the various dyes and of the way in which they are used will be found in that work, and all that is necessary here is to give a list of the dyes found in Manipur, showing against each the Latin and the Vernacular name and the page of the monograph on which they are described. *Acanthaceae* (*khujum pereh*) used in conjunction with safflower, page 9; *Bixa Orellana* (*urei rum*) red or orange, page 14; *Carthamus Tinctorius* (*kusum*) pink or rose, page 17; *Fagopyrum Esculentum*, yellow, page 24; *Fibraurea Trotterii* (*napu*) yellow, page 25; *Garcinia Pedunculata* (*heibung*) a mordant, page 26; *Perilla Ocimoides* (*thoiding*) black, page 40; *Quercus Fenestrata* (*kuhi*) black, page 42; *Quercus Pachyphylla* used for dyeing and tanning, page 42; *Rubia cordifolia* (*moyum*) red, page 44; *Rubia Sikkimensis* (*moyum*) brilliant red, page 46; *Strobilanthes Flaccidifolius* (*Khuma, Khum, Kum*) for dyeing silk, page 48; *Symplocos Racemosa* (*Kairang*) mordant, page 50; *Tectona Grandis* (*chingjagu*) black, page 52.

Salt.

Salt is the mineral deposit which is of most importance in Manipur. The following description of the salt wells which was given by Dr. Brown in 1869 is still correct at the present day.*

Sources of
supply:
wells.

The principal wells are situated at the foot of the hills to the north-east, about 14 miles from the capital; they are four in number, and are named as Ningel, Chandrakhong, Seekong and Waikhong; they all lie close together, and are surrounded by villages wherein reside those engaged in the salt manufacture.

* Page 22.

Wells have been opened in other parts of the valley, but the supply has not been remunerative.

Last year I paid a visit to two of the principal wells, Ningel and Chandrakhong, and the following description of the mode of manufacturing the salt, &c., may prove of interest: Ningel has three wells, all contained in a somewhat elevated dell of small dimensions, surrounded by a low range of hills covered with grass and scrub.

Description
of the salt
wells.

It is stated by the Manipuris that the situation of an underground salt spring is discovered by the presence of a peculiar mist seen hanging over the spot in the early morning. When the sinking of a well is determined on, large trunks of trees are prepared by hollowing out into cylinders, which are sunk gradually until the water is reached. In the Ningel wells the depth at which water is found is about 35 to 40 feet and the wooden cylinders rest upon rock, the intervening stratum consisting chiefly of loose earth and boulders. In the oldest of the three wells at Ningel in which the cylinder has been sunk, it is said, for about 100 years, the wood has become entirely petrified throughout its whole substance, which is more than a foot thick. The others are only partially petrified, they being newer, and the supply of water being less.

How dis-
covered and
constructed.

The soil and vegetation surrounding the wells shows nothing peculiar, and there is no appearance of any deposit of salt on or near the surface.

Appearance
of soil and
vegetation
near wells.

The water is drawn out by wicker buckets and emptied into large earthenware *ghurrahs* or hollowed-out trunks of trees placed by the side of the wells, from whence it is carried in smaller vessels to the boiling down sheds, situated some distance off. The water, as it is drawn, is quite clear, but from its being stored in mud tanks in the sheds, it soon becomes very dirty: this could easily be avoided, but the Manipuris do not seem to object to impurity, and it is positively relished by the hill-men.

Manufac-
ture of salt.

There are in Ningel, to which this description applies, three boiling-down sheds, nearly always fully employed. The salt water is evaporated in small earthenware dishes, shallow and saucer-shaped. Before the water is poured into them they are lined with plantain leaves, to which the salt adheres, and the contents, when the salt has filled the dish, are thus easily removed. The pans, about 100 in number in each shed, are placed over little holes, and underneath is the fire, which is stoked at one end, the fuel used, as in the Sylhet lime kilns, being dry reeds. The attendants are constantly on the move supplying the pans with water, emptying, and filling them again.

Evaporation
of the salt
water.

Chandra-
khong salt
wells.

The Chandrakhong salt wells, two in number, are much the same as above and somewhat similarly situated, in a village about a mile to the north-west of Ningel. There is one peculiarity worth noting in Chandrakhong, that is, the existence of a

Fresh-water
well in
Chandra-
khong.

fresh-water well in close proximity to the salt ones: this well requires constant pumping to prevent its diluting the salt water in the other wells; it would appear from the existence of this fresh-water well that the very edge of the salt deposit at this place has been struck in sinking. The salt water here does not seem to have the same petrifying power as that of Ningel, and the same observation holds good with regard to the other wells.

Other wells.

The other wells present no peculiar features. Seekong has four wells, Waikhong five; from this well a superior quality of salt is obtained, which is set aside for the Raja and his immediate retainers: it can, however, also be procured in the bazars at a slight advance on the price of the commoner sort: it only differs from it in being cleaner.

Ningel, the
oldest well.

Ningel is the oldest of the wells, and has always given the greatest yields.

In the days of native rule, salt was an important source of revenue. Foreign salt was scarce and costly, and the Brahmans were encouraged to declare that it could not be taken by a Manipuri without loss of caste. The industry was carried on by slaves, or by forced labour, but the work is hard and, when the *corvéé* or *lalup* was abolished, difficulties were experienced in obtaining labour. The opening of the cart-road has cheapened foreign salt, which in January, 1905, was selling in Imphal bazar for seven pice a seer, as compared with the four annas charged for Manipuri salt. The old market women sometimes consult the feelings of the more conservative of their customers by mixing this foreign salt with a little dirt, and selling it in cakes similar in form to the cakes of Manipuri salt. The last few years have shewn a serious decrease in the salt revenue of the State. In 1892-98, Rs. 13,800 were received

under this head; in 1908-04 the receipts were only Rs. 5,800. The wells in the valley are put up to public auction. In the hills, iron cauldrons are supplied by the State, for each of which rent is levied at the rate of Re. 1 per mensem.

Iron is found in the shape of small pisolitic nodules of hydrated oxide of iron intermixed with clayey matter. The best deposits have been discovered at Kameng, Kakchingkulen, and Kakchingkuna, and are generally at a depth of four or five feet below the alluvium. The Manipuris used to dig up these particles of ore, and after washing away the earthy matter, heated them in a fire of straw till they became red-hot. The ashes were winnowed off, the ore pounded till it was reduced to powder, and the powder smelted in a charcoal fire. It is said that the industry is now practically extinct and that foreign ore is almost invariably used by the local blacksmiths. Iron.

There are small deposits of limestone near Shugunu and Bishenpur, but larger quantities are found about 85 miles north-east of Imphal on the road to Ukrul. Limestone.

Copper is found in the south-east corner of Manipur, between Moreh thana and Yangpopki, but is not worked. Coal has not yet been discovered in the valley. Good building stone is quarried from the hills. In Imphal itself there are some low hills which contain an unctuous clayey rock, which is eaten by women when in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Copper and coal.



CHAPTER VI.

ECONOMIC CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE. COMMUNICATIONS AND TRADE.

Rents and wages—Prices—Famine—Food—Houses—Furniture—Dress—
Economic condition of people—Communications—Post and Tele-
graphs—Commerce and trade—Development of cart traffic.

Rents and
wages.

LAND is sublet by Brahmans and Rajkumars, and other residents of Imphal town. The usual rate charged is 18 maunds of unhusked paddy per *pari*,* which, at Manipur prices, does not very greatly exceed the revenue assessed by the State upon the land. There are no statistics available to show the area of land sublet.† The Manipuri villagers will combine to help one another to cut and carry the harvest, but think it degrading to take service with other Manipuris, though they do not object to working for foreigners. Poor people will, however, sometimes take an advance of Rs. 80 or 40, in return for which they will work without wages as domestic servants, their labour being set against the interest on the loan

* A *pari* = 2½ acres.

† The information is available in the land revenue registers, but it has never been compiled.

While they are living with their masters they are treated in all respects as humble members of his family. They are fed and clothed, and arrangements are even made to provide them with wives or husbands. Wages, when paid, are low, but so is the cost of living. A boy will come for as little as one rupee a month, and a grown man will be content with four or five rupees. Domestic slavery was in existence in the days of native rule, but the slaves were generally treated with kindness and consideration, differing from servants only in that they received no wages. Slavery is no longer recognised, and, though the servants whose work is set against the interest of an advance that they will never be able to repay are not unlike the old domestic slaves, there is this important difference that, if they choose to leave their masters, they cannot be recovered. Nagas when employed as coolies, except on the road to Lakhipur and Dimapur, receive four annas a day.

The prices of rice and the natural products of Mani- Prices. pur are extraordinarily low. In January 1905, common rice was selling in the Bishenpur bazar at 15 annas a maund, and unhusked rice was only 5 annas 4 pie a maund. These prices are in no way exceptional, though in Imphal, 18 miles away, they are generally a little higher, and the price sometimes rises a little in the middle of the rains. Prior to the opening of the cart road, salt used to be very dear, and in 1895, only three seers were procurable for a rupee. In 1902, the price fell to $5\frac{1}{2}$ seers, and in 1904, eight seers could be bought for the rupee. Pulses are not very cheap, as Manipur is not a great pulse-producing tract, and the market is subject to considerable

fluctuations. In February 1901, 17 seers of matikalai were to be had for a rupee, but in the same month, three years later, the price had fallen to 9 seers. The normal price seems to be about 11 seers for a rupee. Further details with regard to prices will be found in Table V. Hand-made cotton cloth is also extraordinarily cheap, and in the Manipur bazar stout cotton cloth can be bought at a half-penny the square foot. The one article of daily use that is dear in Manipur is the areca-nut, as it has to pay a heavy charge for transport. The usual market rate is from three to four pice a dozen, and as a Manipuri will often eat twenty in a day, it forms a serious item in the family budget.

Famine.

Manipur has not actually suffered from famine within recent years, but no less than twice the condition of affairs was grave enough to be the cause of some anxiety. Much of the grain that had been reaped in the winter of 1890-91 was destroyed in the disturbances that took place, and, between August and November 1891, more than half the population were subsisting on a single meal a day, and began in consequence to show signs of emaciation. In 1896, there was again a scarcity due to the poor harvest reaped in 1894-95, and to the export of rice to Kohima along the cart road. In the middle of August, rice was practically unobtainable, and the price went up to Rs. 10 per maund. Fortunately the harvest was a good one, and, by the end of December, the price had fallen to Rs. 2-4, though that was very high for Manipur. It is far from likely that actual famine ever would occur, and the high prices asked in 1896 probably merely meant that no one had any surplus grain

to sell. The difficulties of supplying the State from outside would, however, be immense, as all the grain would have to be carried 184 miles from Dimapur, along a road which at present has to be closed to cart-traffic in the rains.

The staple food of the Manipuris is rice, of which they **Food.** consume unusually large quantities. With their rice they generally take a dish of curried chillies, and they are very partial to dried fish, the local supply of which is supplemented by imports from Cachar. They also take milk, molasses, potatoes, and other vegetables, and are very fond of the areca-nut. The areca-palm unfortunately will not grow in Manipur, and many tons of these nuts are carried into the valley every year across the seven ranges of mountains that divide it from Cachar. *Ghi* they dislike, and flesh of every kind they eschew, denying themselves even the venison which is permitted to the Mahapurushiyas of Assam. They prefer their fruit as a rule unripe, and are very partial to lemons. There are two articles of diet, the *thoru* and *yungchak*, which are not usually seen outside Manipur. The *thoru* is an aquatic plant whose roots are eaten raw, and are rather like cocoanut though with a much fainter flavour. The *yungchak*, or monkey rice, resembles a gigantic pea pod. It is generally about one foot long but is very thin in proportion to its length.

The ordinary Manipuri house is always built after **Houses.** the same pattern. It is raised a foot or so above the ground on a neat mud plinth, and is very long in proportion to its breadth; a typical house being 50 feet by 17. The front part of the dwelling consists of a porch

or deep verandah about 15 feet in depth, with walls on either side. It is kept scrupulously clean, and acts as a sitting-room for the family; but, if a European so much as puts his foot upon the plinth, the whole of the house will forthwith be abandoned. The posts and beams in the better houses are made of wood, the roof of thatch, the walls of split bamboo plastered over with mud. But what strikes a visitor from the Assam Valley is the extraordinary neatness of the whole building. There are no holes in the walls where the mud plaster has fallen off, the floor and walls of the porch are scrupulously *leaped*, the door is made of timber and is set in a neat frame of wood, and the whole place looks like the home of a man who takes a pride in himself and his surroundings. In front of the house is a piece of level ground which is carefully plastered with mud and cowdung, in the centre of which there is the sacred *tulsi* plant. Here the Manipuri offers up prayer to Heaven, and paints his caste mark on his forehead after taking food, and in the winter time he generally protects the shrub from frost by erecting over it a light shed of bamboo and thatch. Opposite the house there is a cowshed, or, in wealthier houses, a well-built barn with no wall on the side which faces towards the house. This is used as a sitting-room when guests are too numerous to be accommodated in the main dwelling, and as a place in which looms and similar articles of furniture can conveniently be stored. The premises are generally surrounded by a stout mud wall some four feet high, from which tall *ikra* shoots and effectually secures seclusion for the family. There is often too a hedge of bamboo round the garden, which is much more

neatly kept than the compounds of Assam. There is very little jungle, and the ground is covered with vegetables, tobacco, sugarcane, and even mustard and pulse. Such is the typical house in Imphal, and the houses of the villagers are built on the same plan, though they are smaller and generally not so neat.

But though the houses are well made, the furniture Furniture. is, as a rule, extremely simple. Many people eat off plantain leaves, and in the house of the ordinary villager there are few brass or bell-metal utensils. This, perhaps, is due to the desire of being saved the labour of keeping the metal vessels clean, as the plantain leaf is simply thrown away after use, and the disagreeable process of washing up is thus avoided. The article of furniture in which the Manipuri takes most pride is his bed. The bedstead is made of wood, and in rich men's houses is very neatly carved. On this is placed a mattress, and the thickness of this mattress is a good clue to the wealth and position of the owner. A rich man's mattress is sometimes fully two feet thick, and is covered with a piece of red woollen cloth and a long-cloth sheet broad enough to reach to the ground on either side. For bed clothes they use blankets and Manipuri quilts, and the size of the mosquito curtains is another index of the prosperity of the owner of the house. At the side of this bed a mat is spread upon the floor on which either husband or wife sleep when they are ill, as it is thought that a sick man would be subject to attacks of vertigo if raised above the ground. Apart from this, there is very little in the way of furniture. There are mats and baskets, and perhaps a box or two in the houses

of the poorest, and well-to-do people will have a few chairs and tables, but chairs do not, as a rule, commend themselves to the Manipuri.

Dress.

The Manipuris are a well-dressed people, and even when their wardrobe is not large they try to look as clean and smart as possible. The ordinary dress of a villager is a *dhoti* and a sheet, but in Imphal town shirts and coats are coming into use. In the cold weather most men use a padded cotton quilt as a wrap, and padded coats are also sometimes worn. The ordinary dress of a woman is a cloth called *fanek* folded round the bust and reaching to the feet, while a cotton shawl is thrown over the head and shoulders. In addition they sometimes wear a short jacket which is often made of satin or velvet. The *faneks* are generally made of a striped material, and have a neat border at the top and bottom of embroidered silk. They are, however, strained tightly across the bosom and thus completely spoil the shape of the bust. On *gala* days the *faneks* of the well-to-do are of a bright and pretty pattern, and across the shoulders girls wear nothing but a gauzy wrap of delicate and transparent muslin; a costume which is not unlike a rather low-cut Empire gown. In the days of the late Rajas special merit was rewarded by the right to wear a particular kind of coat or cloth. The silk shawls bestowed on those who distinguished themselves in battle are extremely handsome. The body is red or green, and at either end there is a very deep border of embroidered silk. Men generally wear their hair short, with the exception of the little lock at the back of the scalp which is preserved by all devout Vaishnavites. Unmarried

girls wear their hair long behind. In front it is plastered down over the forehead in a deep fringe which reaches almost to the eyebrows; and, not content with this, they let it hang in a sort of fringe at the side of the head over the cheeks and ears. The effect is thus exactly that of an Egyptian mummy. When a girl is betrothed, this fringe cannot be cut without the consent of the future husband. Married women let their hair grow, and turn it back and knot it over the nape of the neck after the fashion that is usually in force in Eastern Bengal; but here again the husband's rights come in, and he must be the first person to turn back his wife's hair.

Though to outward seeming unusually prosperous, the Manipuris are not really very well-to-do. They live in good houses and are always clean and neatly dressed, but the great majority of them have very little cash. In few places is nature more bountiful than in Manipur, but owing to its isolation the inhabitants are unable to find a market for their produce. The problem that presses most urgently for solution is the introduction of capital into the valley. While heavy expenditure was being incurred on public works, the people had little difficulty in obtaining cash to pay their land revenue, but this source of income has now been considerably curtailed. Given a market, the Manipuris could easily grow rich; but with rice selling at 15 annas a maund, and stout home-made cotton cloth at $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per square foot there must evidently only be a small margin of profit. At the same time there is not much indebtedness, the foreign traders being far from certain whether they would recover any advances they might make.

*Economic
condition of
people.*

Communica-
tions.

There are three roads which connect the town of Imphal with the outside world; the cart road over the Naga Hills to the Assam-Bengal Railway at Dimapur which has a total length of 134 miles; the bridle path to Cachar *viâ* Bishenpur and Jirighat; and the bridle path *viâ* Thobal to Tammu, and thence across the Kubo valley into the valley of the Chindwin.

The cart road enters the Manipur State at Mao thana, which is 67 miles from Dimapur and nearly 5,600 feet above the level of the sea. From there it descends steadily along the contours of the hills, and the next bungalow at Maram, 18 miles from Mao, is only 4,596 feet above sea level. From Maram to Kairong bungalow there is a drop of 1,200 feet in a distance of 18 miles. The road at this point crosses the upper waters of the Barak, which, though but a shallow stream in the cold weather, comes down in heavy spate during the rains. Even when in flood the river is hardly more than four feet deep, but the current is so swift that it is impossible for a ferry to be worked, and carts are sometimes detained for four or five days till the violence of the stream abates. Foot passengers can cross by a light suspension bridge, and a fine bridge capable of carrying heavy traffic is now (1905) in course of construction. From Kairong the road gradually rises to the Maiangkang watershed some 500 feet above the valley, and then drops again to Kangpokpi, 18 miles from Kairong. The next stage is to Kanglatombi 18 miles, and from there it is 15 miles into the town of Imphal. All of the staging bungalows are built of stone, contain three rooms, and are not only furnished with beds, tables, and chairs, but are supplied

with glass and crockery. Only about 85 miles of the road between Imphal and Mao thana are metalled.

The hills through which the road has been carried are largely composed of soft grey shale, and the unmetalled portions become so bad after wet weather, that during the rains the road is sometimes closed to cart traffic. The whole of this road is still under the charge of the Assam Administration, but the State makes an annual contribution of Rs. 30,000 towards its maintenance.

The first 17 miles of the Cachar road from Imphal The Cachar
bridle path. past the Foiching rest-house (9 miles) to the Bishenpur bungalow, lie along the valley and are drivable, but at Bishenpur the road turns sharply to the east and sinks to the status of a bridle path. The stage from Bishenpur to the next bungalow at Laimatak is only 18 miles in length; but the traveller has to ascend nearly 2,000 feet to the summit of the Laimatol range and then drops nearly 8,500 feet to the Laimatak river. The next halting place is at the Kaopum, 12 miles further on over the Loangba range, which entails a climb of 2,700 feet and a descent of 2,000 feet the other side. Then comes a comparatively easy march of nine miles to Irang. To the summit of the Kaopum range it is only a climb of 500 feet, but on the other side there is a drop of 2,800 feet in less than four miles. After leaving the Irang bungalow, the path crosses the Irang range (1,960 feet above the level of the sea), drops to the Lengba stream, and then climbs once more to the Nongba rest-house which is 2,710 feet above mean sea level and 12 miles from Irang. From Nongba there is a march of 18 miles, the greater part of which is on an easy downward slope to the bungalow in

the valley of the Barak. The next stage is only 11 miles in length, but the path mounts 2,600 feet to cross the Kala Naga range, and descends nearly 3,000 feet to the Makru bungalow on the other side. From Makru it is a march of 15 miles with a climb up and down of 1,600 feet to Jirighat, the frontier of Manipur, whence it is another 24 miles to Silohar town. The path thus crosses seven ranges of hills and five main rivers, and in the course of 85 miles the traveller from Manipur has to ascend altogether over 12,000 feet and descend rather more than 14,000 feet. Nearly all the rivers along this road are crossed by wire suspension bridges, with the exception of the Jiri, over which a ferry is maintained.

The Tammu
bridle path.

South south-west of Imphal runs the road to Tammu on the Burmese frontier. There are staging bungalows at Thobal on the 14th, and Palel on the 19th mile, and for the first 81 miles the road is drivable. From there to the Burmese frontier there is nothing but a bridle path, and beyond Aimol on the 85th mile there are no rest-houses. From Tammu it is only 24 miles across the Kubo Valley and a range of hills to Sittang on the Chindwin river.

The only other driving roads in the Manipur valley outside Imphal are the continuation of the Bishenpur road to Moirang, and the road to the foot of the hills below Kangjupkul. None of these roads are metalled, with the exception of the road to Dimapur, and are thus liable to be much cut up if required to carry heavy traffic in the rains. The rivers are generally crossed by wooden bridges, and as the timber is of poor quality and soon rots if exposed to the action of the weather, it is found

cheaper to cover them with a roof of thatch, a custom which gives them a somewhat singular appearance.

There are only two post offices in Manipur which are situated at Imphal and Mao thana. Two lines of post are maintained by the State, to Kohima which is reached in about 40 hours, and to Tammu which is reached in about two days. Government also keeps up a line to Silohar which is reached in 50 hours. The mail is carried in each case by runners. Between Kohima and Imphal the runner carries what is known as an "open bag," so that letters can be received and posted by any person travelling along the road. A telegraph line crosses the Naga Hills, passes through Imphal, where there is an office, and enters Burma *viâ* Tammu.

The internal trade of the State is carried on at markets held in the open air, and outside Imphal such a thing as a permanent shop is practically unknown. Even in the town itself there are only 36 shops, 29 of which are kept by the shrewd merchants of Marwar. The principal articles offered for sale at these shops are cotton goods and thread, umbrellas, brass and bell-metal utensils, oil and fancy goods, with flour and other kinds of grain. Foreigners are not allowed to open shops in the interior, and the Manipuri, though he is fond enough of trade, is not a shopkeeper. Markets are, however, held all over the valley which are largely attended by the villagers. In Imphal itself there are no less than 18, but all are completely overshadowed by the great afternoon bazar. The day bazar is situated near the brick bridge over the Nambol, and is a very respectable market as markets go. The afternoon bazar is only a few hundred yards west of

Post and
Telegraph.

Commerce
and trade.
Internal
trade.

the morning bazar, and is held on a fine level piece of ground in which there is ample elbow room. This is, no doubt, the reason for the change of site, for to the casual visitor it at first seems strange that the business centre of the town should be shifted a few hundred yards just at the close of day. At 8-30 P.M. the place is absolutely deserted. There are the fifty-five low plinths on which the women sit, but there is nothing to suggest that this is a place of business, and the casual visitor could easily imagine that he was looking at the site of rows of unfinished cooly lines. An hour-and-a-half later the place is white with people. There are from 2,000 to 8,000 women sitting behind their wares, and the throng of purchasers is even larger. The prices are extraordinarily cheap and the articles offered for sale most miscellaneous in their character. There is cotton in the raw, cotton thread, creepers that are used as dyes, and enormous quantities of cotton cloths of different colours and patterns. There are cotton-padded quilts and coats, hats, and shoes, and various other articles of dress. Excellent specimens of brass work are on sale, in addition to the sickles, daos, and hoes that the cultivator needs. Mattresses are there, bamboo mats and baskets, jewellery, and pottery. In addition to all these miscellaneous articles, there is a large store of grain of various kinds, fruit, vegetables, poultry, salt, and all the different kinds of food that are generally to be found in a market in Assam.

The Imphal afternoon bazar is held just in front of the old gate into the *pat*, and in former days there was a curious custom under which ten of the Raja's servants

used to take from the market women sufficient supplies to last them for one day. Needless to say these supplies were never paid for, and this irregular toll was felt to be a serious grievance. Efforts were made from time to time to induce the Raja to forego his claim, but it is doubtful whether the custom was ever really allowed to fall into disuetude, and the women are still afraid that it may be revived as soon as the State is placed again under native management. There are very few sheds in any of these bazars, and the market-place consists of rows of plinths on which the vendors sit. In rainy weather each woman brings her own umbrella and plants it in the ground in front of her. Men very seldom sell at these bazars and do not often attend even as purchasers.

The following is a list of the places outside Imphal, ^{Bazar- out-}side Imphal where bazars are held :—

Bishenpur.	Moirang.
Buri Bazar or Lambol.	Oinam.
Chalow.	Palel.
Chandrakhong.	Sekmai.
Hiyangthang.	Sengmai.
Lamlai.	Thobal.
Lamsang.	Waikhong.
Leisangkhong.	Wanjing.
Lilang.	Yarapok.
Mayang Imphal.	

Tea seed and buffaloes are imported from Burma, but ^{Foreign Trade.} most of the trade of the State is with Cachar and the Assam Valley. The principal exports to Cachar are cattle, and timber and other forest produce from the State forests on the western frontier. Tea seed was at

one time an important article of export, and in 1896-97 was valued at about Rs. 1,75,000. Almost the whole of this seed came originally from Burma, so that the State suffered comparatively little loss when the depressed state of the tea industry put an end to the trade. Tea seed was, however, a source of considerable revenue to the Raja in the days of native rule, as he kept the monopoly of it in his hands.

The principal imports are cotton piece-goods and yarn, dried fish, and betelnuts. Rice is exported in considerable quantities along the cart road to Dimapur, and, were it not for the fact that all traffic is at present suspended in the rains, the trade would probably be considerably larger. At the same time it must be borne in mind that, cheap though rice is in Manipur, it has to bear a heavy charge on account of freight; and when prices are as cheap in Assam as they were at the beginning of 1905, there is very little profit in the business. The principal imports by this route are cotton yarn and piece-goods, kerosine oil, *ghi*, salt, and sugar. The following statement shows the average value of the principal exports during the past three years to and from Cachar and Assam. Statistics for Cachar are registered at Jirighat, and at Mao thana for Assam.

Statement shewing exports from Manipur to the Surma and Assam Valleys.

Names of articles.	Average value of exports during the three years ending 1903-04, <i>vid</i>	
	Jirighat.	Mao thana.
	Rs.	Rs.
Cattle	27,022	2,610
Canes and rattans	3,914	...
Cotton twist and yarn (Indian)	...	3,560
„ piece-goods (Indian)	7,584	4,827
Rice husked	731	93,998
Ghi	20	1,567
Dry fish	...	1,765
Spices other than betel-nuts	1,554	...
Timber	85,577	...
Bamboos	13,041	...
All other articles	15,554	6,122
TOTAL	1,54,947	1,18,949

Statement showing imports to Manipur from the Surma and Assam Valleys.

Names of articles imported.	Average value of imports during the three years ending 1903-04, <i>vid</i>	
	Jirighat.	Mao thana.
	Rs.	Rs.
Horses, ponies and mules ...	3,785	...
Cotton, twist and yarn (European) ...	8,887	...
" " " (Indian) ...	...	18,316
" piece goods (European) ...	5,078	1,582
" " " (Indian) ...	777	34,263
Wheat ...	...	2,884
Gram and pulse ...	28	3,542
Liquors ...	...	8,707
Brass and copper ...	3,092	...
Mineral oils ...	1,111	18,678
Ghi ...	...	9,918
Dry fish ...	19,636	211
Salt ...	1,418	19,353
Betel-nuts ...	57,532	2,850
Sugar refined ...	87	4,938
All other articles ...	7,575	18,995
TOTAL ...	1,03,901	1,38,737

Develop-
ment of cart
traffic.

Trade with Assam has been enormously facilitated by the opening of the cart road, and by a development of the cart traffic, for which it would be very hard to find a parallel in Assam. The first carts to enter Manipur were sent up in 1896. Rs. 50 was offered for each cart from Nigriting to Manipur, and the owners were certain of a large profit on the load of rice which they could bring back on the homeward journey. In spite of these

liberal terms, scarcely a man was willing to undertake the work. Six or seven years later there were over 1,700 carts registered as plying between Imphal and Dimapur. Sylhet has had excellent cart roads for many years, yet there is hardly a cart to be hired in the district; and it is difficult to recall a single industry in Assam which has been developed by the natives of the Province with such remarkable rapidity. The Manipuris are, however, a very imitative people, and, like the Khasis, are willing to give any novelty a trial. The art of making carts and cart wheels was speedily acquired, cattle in Manipur are cheap and good, and in a surprisingly short space of time a flourishing transport business was established. Freights are in consequence unusually low, and the charge for sending a maund of goods the 184 miles from Dimapur to Imphal is only eight or ten annas in the dry weather. From Imphal to Dimapur the rates are generally higher and are seldom less than Re. 1-8 per maund.

CHAPTER VII.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Lalup—Revenue administration since 1891—House tax—
Fisheries—Other sources of revenue—Criminal and Civil Justice—
Punishments—Police and jails—Education—Medical aspects.

Land Re-
venue.

THE following description of the way in which land revenue was realized in the days of native rule is taken from the work by Dr. Brown :—

“ The whole land system of the valley starts with the assumption that all the land belongs to the Raja, and is his to give away or retain, as he pleases. Under the Raja is an official, named the Phoonan Saloomba, whose duty it is to superintend all matters connected with land cultivation. He looks after the measurement, receives the rent in kind, and transacts all business matters connected with land on behalf of the Raja. The land is subdivided into villages and their surroundings : the headman of each division or village looks after the cultivation, and is responsible for the realisation of the tax payable in kind by each cultivator ; he holds no interest in the land, and is merely an agent of the Raja.

Besides the land thus directly, as it were, cultivated for the Raja, grants of land are given to officials and favourites, sometimes for their own lives only, or for a specified time, sometimes for themselves and descendants. These hold their lands on payment of the usual tax in kind. Connections of the Raja, Brahmans, and sepoys, pay no rent or tax on a fixed proportion of land regulated in each case, but on any increase on the land cultivated above that proportion rent is paid.

The proportion of land cultivated under what may be called the direct system on account of the Raja is about a third

of the whole; rather more than a third is in the possession of members of the ruling family, Brahmans and sepoys; the remainder is in the hands of the headmen, officials, etc., who hold it by favour from the Raja. Each individual liable for *lalup* or forced labour for the State, is entitled to cultivate for his support one *pari* of land, subject to the payment of the regular tax in kind.

The tax in kind realised from each cultivator, and which goes to the Raja, is liable to many modifications, although in theory the tax is a fixed one. The tax as given by McCulloch varies from two baskets to thirteen from each *pari*.^{*} I am informed that the two baskets, which nominally should only be taken from everyone alike, is realised from favourites, and that the average from others may be set down at 12 baskets yearly: this is seldom exceeded, except in rare emergencies, as war, &c. This, again, will only apply to land cultivated for the Raja or held by those subject to *lalup*. In cases where lands are held by officials, etc., as middlemen, the burdens are more severe, running as high as twenty-four baskets per *pari*, which I am informed is the outside limit. The average yield per *pari* is about 150 baskets annually; each basket contains about 60 pounds."

In addition to this tax in kind each male between 17 and 60 was supposed to render to the State ten days' labour out of every forty. The people seem to have been divided into different guilds, to each of which was allotted the duty of providing some particular article of use or luxury required by the Raja and his numerous retinue. Some, for instance, would build the roads and bridges; to others would be assigned the various crafts, the manufacture of brass or bell-metal utensils, of jewellery, or of leather work. Others again would be deputed to the personal service of the Raja and his followers. A list of the different guilds, as recorded by Dr. Brown, has already been printed on page 55. A similar system was in force amongst the Ahoms, and, were it not for the difficulty of checking abuses in the working, it is a system

The *lalup* or
corvée.

* A *pari* = 2½ acres.

which is not entirely unsuited to the conditions of life upon the North-East Frontier. Labour is the one thing in which the inhabitants are really rich ; it is the one thing that can be taken from them and leave them no poorer than before. Nearly every man sits idle for a considerable portion of the year, and the native rulers did not hesitate to avail themselves of this great store of potential labour which now unfortunately goes to waste. It does not appear from the reports of either Brown or McCulloch that the people found the system of *lalup* particularly irksome or oppressive, though in the case of the Manipuris it was combined with a much heavier tax in kind than was levied from the subjects of the Ahom kings. Major-General Sir James Johnstone, a former Political Agent of Manipur and an officer who was full of sympathy with the natives of this country, described the *lalup* system in the following terms and much regretted that it was entirely abolished not only in Manipur but in Assam :—

“The system was a good one, and when not carried to excess, pressed heavily on nobody. It was especially adapted to a poor state sparsely populated. In such a state, under ordinary circumstances, where the amount of revenue is small, and the rate of wages often comparatively high, it is next door to impossible to carry out many much-needed public works by payment. On the other hand, every man in India who lives by cultivation, has much spare time on his hands, and the ‘*lalup*’ system very profitably utilises this, and for the benefit of the community at large. I never heard of it being complained of as a hardship. The system in Assam led to the completion of many useful and magnificent public works. High embanked roads were made throughout the country, and large tanks, lakes, appropriately termed ‘*seas*,’ were excavated under this arrangement. Many of the great works of former ages in other parts of India are due to something of the same kind.

It was a sad mistake giving up the system in Assam without retaining the right of the state to a certain number of days' labour on the roads every year, as is the custom to this day, I believe, in Canada, Ceylon, and other countries."*

When the State came under British administration the system of *lalup* was abolished. Under the Raja the people were compelled to attend at Imphal, but very little supervision was exercised over the tale of work, and half of them, perhaps, sat idle. The more business-like arrangements of the British put a stop to all this loafing, and thus produced considerable discontent. This discontent took a practical and very objectionable form, and the people began to emigrate to Cachar, a thing which had not been allowed in the days of native rule. *Lalup* was accordingly abolished, and in lieu of it, a tax of Rs. 4 per *pari* was assessed on all settled land in the valley. In 1898-94, this rate was raised to Rs. 5 per *pari* or Rs. 2 per acre. Though low enough in itself, the assessment is probably quite as high as the peculiar economic conditions of the State permit. In 1904, Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, who had been Superintendent of the State since 1891, reported that rice was so cheap that it hardly repaid the cost of cultivation, with the result that some difficulty was occasionally experienced in obtaining the money required to pay the revenue. When the State first came under British administration, the land was managed directly from the Superintendent's office. This was, however, but a temporary expedient, and in 1894, the valley was divided into four

Revenue substituted for *lalup* after 1891.

* "My Experiences in Manipur," by Major-General Sir James Johnstone, page 114.

pannas or tahsils, each of which had a revenue demand of about half a lakh of rupees. The tahsildars, or *lakpas*, received a commission of 10 per cent. on their collections, but were required to defray the charges of their establishments, which amounted to between Rs. 1,800 and Rs. 1,700 per annum. A tax of Rs. 2 was levied on each homestead, the garden ground was not assessed to revenue, and a staff of eight amins, under an official known as an Amin *Lakpa* was engaged in measuring up the land.

The measurement of the valley.

Experience showed that the *lakpas* required much closer supervision than so small a staff could give them. At the end of three years, the arrears, good and bad, amounted to no less a figure than Rs. 86,000, or about one-third of the total land revenue demand, and it was obvious that some reform was necessary. The size of the *pannas* was accordingly reduced by the erection of Imphal into a separate *panna*, the *lakpas* were relieved of all work connected with the settlement of new land and the registration of titles, and a Sub-Deputy Collector was appointed with a staff of four kanungos and forty amins to measure up the valley. The measurement was made on the non-cadastral system with a rod, and was completed by March 31st, 1899. After deducting the homestead land which was still assessed to house-tax, it was found that the assessed area had risen from 255,000 *bighas* to 320,000 *bighas*, an increase by re-measurement of no less than 65,000 *bighas*. The survey staff was then reduced to twenty amins under two kanungoes working under the general direction of the Sub-Deputy Collector. In the following year the house-tax was

abolished, and the homestead land was measured up and assessed to revenue at the ordinary rate; a measure which produced a small increase of 4 per cent. on the previous revenue demand.

The principal registers on which the land revenue assessment is based are the *dag-chittas* which record the name of the occupant of each field, and the *jamabandhis* which show the number of fields included in each *patta*. The *patta* or lease confers no title to the holding, but in practice, when land is taken up for purposes of State, it is customary to give the owner compensation. Land is also bought and sold and mortgaged as though the occupant had a valid legal title. For estates which pay more than Rs. 10 in revenue, the revenue is due in two instalments, one-half on January 15th, one-half on March 15th. The revenue on smaller estates is paid in one instalment on January 15th. Revenue is collected by *Lakpas*, who move about through the areas committed to their charge. It was at one time thought that these tours were the cause of some inconvenience to the people, as they were compelled to support the *Lakpa's* large and sometimes needy retinue; and in 1902-08, they were ordered to remain at their headquarters. Experience showed that the Manipuri would not come in to pay his revenue unsolicited, and the system of touring had to be revived. The Manipuris are allowed to resign their land, provided that they give notice to the land revenue authorities on or before December 31st. During the last three years, the average area of land resigned and of new land taken up was 2,049 and 8,248 acres respectively. Further details with regard

to land revenue will be found in Table VII. There is still a considerable area of uncultivated land in the valley. In many cases, however, some capital expenditure would be required either to drain it, or to bring more water on to it, before it would be fit for cultivation. The principal obstacles to the extension of cultivation are scarcity of labour and the low price of rice, which does not offer sufficient profit to stimulate the villagers to further exertions.

House Tax.

Amongst the hill tribes a tax of Rs. 8 is levied on each house, and no attempt is made to measure up the area under cultivation. The hills are divided into five *lams*, each of which is in charge of a Manipuri official called a *Lam* subadar, assisted by some eight Manipuri *lambus* or peons. In the north, there is the Mao *Lam*, and the Tankul *Lam* includes the hills along the north-east of the valley. South of the Tankul country is the Tammu *Lam*; the Moirang *Lam* is in the south-west corner of the State, and the Kapui *Lam* to the north of it. The hill man, like other savages, is not as simple as he looks, and does not pay a tax if he can help it. In 1899, a Manipuri enumerator who was checking the houses in a Tankul village, found that no less than 30 belonged to widows, who, according to the rules in force, are exempted from assessment. This number seemed so disproportionately large that he determined to pursue his investigations further. At the dead of night he returned with the village elders and found seventeen of these so-called widows quietly sleeping with their husbands, who were forthwith assessed to revenue.

After the land and house-tax the principal sources

of revenue to the State are forests, fisheries, foreigner's tax, salt, and the amount which is annually paid by Government in compensation for the cession of the Kubo Valley to Burma. Details for each of these heads will be found in Table VII, and the abstract in the margin shows the receipts in 1908-04. The system under which the land revenue, house tax, salt tax, and forest revenue is raised has already been described.

Miscellaneous revenue.	Rs.
Thousands omitted.	
Land revenue ...	277
House Tax ...	46
Forests ...	26
Fisheries ...	24
Kubo Valley ...	6
Salt ...	6
Foreigners ...	6
Other heads ...	4
Total...	395

Fish is an important article of diet in Manipur, and there are no less than 87 fisheries which are regularly put up to auction, in addition to minor streams, *bils*, and the Loktak lake in which anyone is allowed to fish free of charge. The following are the most valuable fisheries: The Waithou Shorien and the Waithou Phoomnow are two *bils* about eleven miles from Imphal, on the road to Thobal, which in 1908-04 fetched Rs. 6,450 and Rs. 1,475 respectively. The Ekope *bil*, south of Thobal sold, in that year, for Rs. 8,170; the Kajipat *bil*, a little to the south of the town, for Rs. 1,410; and the Poomlen *bil*, near the Loktak, for Rs. 1,000. The only other fishery which in that year fetched more than Rs. 1,000 was the Yangoi river, near the Loktak, which was knocked down for Rs. 1,850. The auction purchasers generally admit all the persons likely to frequent the fishery into partnership, and share with them the profit or the loss, if by any chance loss accrues; but in the case of rivers a cess is occasionally levied on each net employed. The *bils* are filled with water in the rains when the rivers are in flood, and generally dry up in the cold season. Most of the fish are caught by the simple expedient of setting wicker-work traps at the

places where the water drains back into the rivers. All the water that enters the extensive Waithou *bil* drains back through a narrow gorge between two hills not more than ten or fifteen yards in width. During the fishing season as many as two hundred women will be seen sitting here every morning, waiting to buy the catch of the previous night. A succession of high floods followed by a rapid fall of the water is the condition of affairs most favourable to the fishing industry. The net that is most generally in use is a square-shaped piece of netting with a pocket in the centre; the opposite corners of which are fixed to the four ends of two flexible bamboos crossed above it in the shape of an X. A stout bamboo is attached to it as a handle, and the net, in fact, differs in no way from the *parangi* of Assam. The ordinary cast net of Assam or *kewali* is also used by the men. Strange to say, the Manipuris in spite of their religious bigotry have not the smallest scruple with regard to the sale of fish. Even Brahman women will act as fishwives, though amongst most Hindus the sale of fish is restricted to the very lowest castes. Anything that cannot be sold or eaten fresh is dried in the sun, or, in the case of large fish taken in the hill streams, over a big fire. The best eating fish are *sareng*, *ngara*, *kharoubi*, *pemba*, *nga khra*, and *ngatel*; but none of them appeal strongly to the European palate.

Other
sources of
revenue.

The foreigner's tax is a tax of Rs. 5 on every adult foreigner settled in the State. Income Tax is only assessed on the salaries paid to Government servants, and does not go to swell the resources of Manipur. Court fees are not charged in cases in which Manipuris are

concerned. There are, at present, no receipts from excise, as the Manipuri does not take either liquor or intoxicating drugs, and no attempt is made to tax the liquor of the hill man. The poppy used formerly to be cultivated by the Muhammadans. It was found that opium was being smuggled into British territory, and orders have recently (1905) been issued to prohibit poppy cultivation. Rice beer is brewed by mixing a yeast made of powdered rice and the roots of a creeper with boiled rice, and leaving it to ferment. Spirit is also distilled from this liquor by primitive native methods.

During the minority of the Raja, the administration Government of Manipur has been vested in the Superintendent of the State. Separate offices are maintained in separate buildings for the Superintendent of the State and Political Agent, though the two functions are united in the single individual. This is necessary, as when the Raja is entrusted with the administration of the country, the State office will be made over to him.

The Political Agent is assisted by a member of the Assam Commission. The land revenue administration is supervised by a Sub-Deputy Collector lent by the Assam Government, and public works are in charge of a State engineer.

For the purposes of the administration of justice the valley is divided into eleven circles, in each of which there is a panchayat court. These courts have power to try civil suits in which the subject-matter in dispute does not exceed Rs. 50; and criminal offences of a minor degree, i.e., simple hurt, assault, trespass, adultery, which, as has already been explained, is not considered a

Criminal and
Civil Justice.

serious offence by the Manipuris; and theft and mischief where the property stolen or injured is not valued at more than Rs. 50. The only penalty which the panchayat courts can inflict is fine, and that must not exceed Rs. 50 in rural areas. The town panchayat at Imphal can impose fines up to Rs. 100 and can decide civil and criminal cases of an equal value. Rural panchayats have been opened at Sengmai, Maklong, Foiching, Kameng, Moirang, Wangoi, Kokching, Chairel, Ningel, and Bamonkombu; but they are said to be of little use, and they only decide a few disputes of a petty character. A special panchayat court also sits at Lilang for the trial of cases between Muhammadan Manipuris. Members of the rural panchayats are remunerated by the allowance of one *pari** of rice land free of revenue while in office, but members of the town panchayat receive no less than twenty-five *paris*. Above the panchayats comes the Chirap, a court composed of five magistrates which sits in Imphal. They can try civil suits up to any value, and all criminal cases except murder and offences against the State, but they cannot award more than two years' rigorous imprisonment, a fine of Rs. 500, or a flogging. Appeals from the town panchayat lie to the Chirap, each member of which is remunerated while in office by the grant of fifty *paris* of land free of revenue.

All cases to which a European British subject is a party are tried by the Political Agent or his Assistant; and the same officer, in his capacity of Superintendent

* A *pari* = 2½ acres.

of the State, decides all disputes in which a hillman is concerned. Appeals from the orders of the Assistant or of the Chirap Court lie to the Political Agent. This officer can pass sentence of death or of transportation for life ; but the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner is required whenever the death penalty is imposed or imprisonment for more than seven years. Manipuri custom is to a great extent followed in the courts, and the penalties prescribed differ to some extent from those laid down in the Penal Code. Adultery, for instance, is only punishable with fine, and petty theft with fine or flogging.*

The present courts are said to be too cumbersome for the prompt despatch of business, and the question of replacing them by Manipuri magistrates and munsifs has been already mooted. Most of the criminal cases consist of petty thefts of property and cattle, and house-breaking. Table VI shows the quantity of criminal and civil work disposed of.

Under native rule the punishments inflicted were ^{Punish-ments.} not unfrequently excessively severe. The murderer used originally to be executed in the way in which he killed his victim ; but Colonel Johnstone, when he was Political Agent, succeeded in inducing the Raja to order all persons sentenced to death to be beheaded. The victim was thrown on his back upon the ground, the back of his neck was placed on the trunk of a plantain tree,

* For further details with regard to the rules for the administration of justice in the Manipur State, see Manual of Executive Rules and Orders, pp. 75-81.

and the head hacked off. Flogging took place in the afternoon bazar, and sometimes as many as 500 lashes were administered; a whipping which occasionally proved fatal to the unfortunate recipient. Women were never imprisoned, and, at the present day, sentences of imprisonment are very seldom passed on women, so strong is the prejudice of the Manipuris on the subject. The form of punishment inflicted was, however, much more opposed to the ideas of decency prevailing in the West. The guilty woman was stripped naked save for a tiny apron of cloth. Her breasts were painted red, and a sweeper's brush fastened between her thighs. A rope was then put round her waist, and she was led in this disgraceful plight through the crowded afternoon bazar. Over her naked buttocks was suspended a small drum, and a second man followed behind beating the drum and proclaiming her offence. Women who had passed through this ordeal generally allowed an interval of several months to elapse before they again appeared in the bazar, and it thus had the affect of confining them for a time to their own houses.

Police and
Jails.

There is a regular system of rural police in the valley; a chaukidar, who is elected by the people subject to the approval of the Political Agent, being appointed to every hundred houses. There is, however, only one civil police station in the State, which is situated at Imphal, and the whole civil police force consists of 19 men under a Sub-Inspector. A battalion of military police is kept up by the State, which has a sanctioned strength of 13 commissioned officers and 364 non-commissioned officers and men. The men wear a neat

uniform of dark green cloth, and are armed with muzzle-loading tower muskets of 1856 and bayonets. The military police hold eight outposts on the three main roads, distributed as follows:—

Cachar Road.		Kohima Road.		Tammu Road.	
Outpost.	Men.	Outpost.	Men.	Outpost.	Men.
Kaopum ...	10	Sengmai ...	4	Sibong ...	9
Barak ...	4	Kairong ...	10	Moreh ...	3
Makru ...	4	Mao ...	8		

The chaukidars are useful as a reporting agency, and sometimes bring to light ingenious frauds which have been perpetrated by Manipuri swindlers. On one occasion, an escaped convict collected Rs. 600 amongst the Nagas to pay for the Political Agent's passage home. The trick was exposed by a Naga, who met the Political Agent and expressed some surprise that he should still be there, as several months before he had paid Rs. 5 towards the cost of his steamer ticket. On another occasion, a bill from a Calcutta tradesman, headed with the various coats of arms that sometimes adorn these documents, was used as a Government parwana, authorising the levy of a cess of Rs. 2 per house to be paid to the bearer of this imposing piece of paper. Another case occurred in 1904, when some convicts, marching with a warder through the valley, collected Rs. 400, on the pretence that it was to be used for the reconstruction of the house of the Assistant Political Officer, which had been burned to the ground a short time before.

The Jail is surrounded by a fine brick wall and has accommodation for 100 prisoners. The walls of the

wards are made of whole bamboos. The prisoners are usually employed on extramural labour.

Education.

Education, it need hardly be said, received little encouragement in the days of native rule. In 1869, Brown reported that there were no schools or any wish for them on the part of the authorities. Offers of assistance in the formation of a school were declined by the Manipuris, who stated that they preferred to remain ignorant. Some of the highest officials did not know how to read or write, and, like the knights of the middle ages, despised such arts as beneath their serious consideration. In 1872, a vernacular school was opened at Imphal, but the attendance was extremely small, and very little was done by the Raja or his officers to stimulate the cause of education. The Johnstone Middle English School was, however, opened in 1885, and, though it was closed for a time during the disturbances of 1891, it was reopened on June 1st, 1892. In the following year two pathshalas were opened; and in 1903-1904, there were in the State one Middle English, and one Upper Primary school and 28 pathshalas. Text-books have been prepared in Manipuri, and instruction is now given in that language. The year marked a great advance in the spread of education, and the Manipuris are evidently becoming sensible of its advantages. The number of pathshalas was increased from sixteen to twenty-eight, and the daily average attendance rose from 897 to 1,257. Female education has as yet made little progress. A girls' school was opened, but was closed again in 1902 from motives of economy. There are no difficulties in the shape of caste scruples or the

restrictions of the purdah to be overcome, but the shrewd Manipuri woman would have to be convinced of the practical value of education before she would send her child to school. In 1901, only 9 per mille of the population knew how to read and write, and the number of literate women was less than one per mille. It must not be supposed from this that the Manipuris are rude uncultured boors. Cut off as they are by their mountain walls from their fellow-men, it is not to be expected that they would take much interest in the affairs of the outer world, and a literary education has few charms for them. But they are well dressed, well housed, and clever craftsmen. Men and women alike are full of enterprise and intelligence, and few people manage better without schooling than the Manipuri.

Manipur is by no means an unhealthy place. In spite of the presence of myriads of mosquitoes, malarial fever is not so prevalent as it is in the neighbouring Province of Assam. The Manipuri is a larger and stronger man than the Assamese; he is generally well developed, and without being lean he seldom runs to fat. He does not age so rapidly as the plainsman of Assam, and once that the perils of infancy have been passed, the mean duration of life is probably considerable. But, if he is fairly free from fever and the general debility with which it is so frequently accompanied, he often pays a heavy toll to cholera. Drinking-water is usually taken from the small pond in the cottage garden into which all the drainage of the compound is deliberately carried. As though this were not enough, the people wash their clothes, their cooking utensils, and their persons in these

Medical Aspects. Manipur healthy, but liable to epidemics of cholera.

filthy pools, and then draw their drinking-water from them. If the rain holds off too long in the spring, these ponds dry up, and the people have recourse to the rivers, which have by this time sunk to little more than ditches creeping between high banks covered with every kind of filth. The first flood brings down this accumulation of impurities, and if they contain the germs of cholera, they are disseminated with surprising rapidity throughout the valley. The infection is still further spread by the custom which dictates that the dead should be burned on the river's bank, and that the corpse of a Brahman, even if he has died of cholera, should be bathed in the river itself. Cholera is first mentioned in the Manipur State chronicles in 1830, when it is said to have been the cause of heavy mortality. In 1850, there was another serious epidemic, and the Maharaja, Nur Singh, was numbered amongst the victims. Outbreaks of cholera are also reported in 1856, 1858, 1872, 1886, 1891, and 1896. In 1898, the disease appeared in the valley in the most virulent form during the months of May and June, and raged in the hills in July and August. The season was a very dry one, there was little drinking-water to be obtained except from the muddy streams flowing along the river beds, and this source of supply was soon contaminated. Many casualties went no doubt unrecorded, but the reported deaths from cholera in the valley were no less than 6,053, or 82 per mille of the population as recorded in 1901; a terrible death-rate assuredly to be caused by one disease, and that too in the short space of two months.

Small-pox.

Small-pox used at one time to be very common, but

the people are fully alive to the advantages of vaccination; and in the five years ending with 1902-03, 60 per mille of the population were successfully vaccinated each year, a proportion which was nearly 50 per cent. higher than that recorded for the Province as a whole. In 1891, when small-pox was raging with great virulence in the valley, the British garrison enjoyed almost complete immunity, and the people were not slow to act upon this admirable object-lesson. At the present day the Nagas soon complain if the vaccinator does not visit their villages with a certain regularity. The Kukis, however, regard the subject from a different point of view. Like Malthus they are afraid that the food supply may not suffice for the ever-increasing number of consumers. It is hard enough, they say, to live as it is, so why keep people alive whom God would kill. In the chapter on the history of the State, it has been shown that the Kukis are always willing enough to assist the Deity in his efforts to keep down the population.

Influenza occasionally causes serious mortality, especially in the hills, and the people suffer a good deal from dysentery. Conjunctivitis and itch are very common, and venereal disease is said to be fairly prevalent, though the troops in garrison have been fairly free of recent years. Measles sometimes causes serious infant mortality. No accurate information is, however, available with regard to the medical aspects of the State. Vital statistics are not recorded, and there are very few data from which conclusions can be drawn. This, at any rate, seems fairly clear, that man, like most other living things, enjoys better health and attains a higher degree

Other diseases.

of physical development than he does in the valleys of the Surma or the Brahmaputra. There is only one hospital in the State. It contains beds for 12 male and 2 female patients, and in 1908, had a daily average of nearly 9 inmates. The Manipuris themselves do not, however, seem to place much faith in European medicine, as the daily average of out-door patients was only 29—a figure which is very small for such a large and populous community as Imphal. To surgery they object on the ground that it is painful, but will consent to be operated on for stone when the disease has actually become worse than the prospective remedy.

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TABLE I.

*Rainfall.**Average rainfall in inches (for 12 years).*

	Inches.		Inches.		Inches.
January	... 0.70	May	... 6.94	September	... 6.23
February	... 2.18	June	... 11.53	October	... 5.25
March	... 4.90	July	... 12.75	November	... 1.62
April	... 5.38	August	... 11.32	December	... 0.71
				TOTAL	... 69.51

TABLE II.

General Statistics of Population.

				Persons.	Males.	Females.
Population—						
1901	...	...	...	284,465	139,632	144,833
1881	...	...	...	221,070	109,557	111,513
Variation—						
1881-1901	...	...	...	63,395	30,075	33,320
	1901.					
Religion—						
Hindus	...	...	...	170,577	84,486	86,091
Muhammadans	...	...	...	10,883	5,178	5,205
Animists	...	...	...	103,307	49,855	53,452
Christians	...	...	...	45	84	11
Others	...	...	...	153	79	74
Civil condition—						
Unmarried	...	...	...	140,399	76,099	64,300
Married	...	...	...	116,925	57,931	58,994
Widowed	...	...	...	27,141	5,602	21,539
Literacy—						
Literate in Bengali	...	...	...	1,487	1,441	46
Literate in English	...	...	...	181	172	9
Illiterate	...	...	...	281,807	137,036	144,771
Languages spoken—						
Naga	...	...	...	59,454	29,005	30,449
Kuki	...	...	...	40,201	19,084	21,117
Manipuri	...	...	...	181,847	88,671	92,676

TABLE III.
Birthplace, Race, Castes and Occupation.

	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTHPLACE—			
Born in the State	281,222	136,824	144,398
" " Assam	645	486	159
" " Bengal	602	543	59
" " the United Provinces	1,161	1,115	46
" " Nepal	525	383	142
" " Elsewhere	310	281	29
RACE AND CASTE—			
Brahman	7,295	4,012	3,283
Eurasian	9	9	.....
European	28	21	7
Kshattriya	160,631	78,664	81,967
Kuki	41,262	19,791	21,471
Loi	3,618	1,749	1,869
Naga	36,576	17,926	18,650
" (Anal)	186	87	99
" (Chiru)	87	42	45
" (Kapui)	1,106	499	607
" (Koirao)	609	327	282
" (Tankul)	19,991	9,489	10,502
OCCUPATION—			
Workers	150,767	77,477	73,290
Dependents	133,698	.....	.....
TOTAL SUPPORTED—			
Cultivating landholders	94,001	57,859	36,142
Cultivating tenants	20,820	14,287	6,533
Jhum cultivators	86,086	44,620	41,466
Cotton weavers (hand industry)	20,916	1,464	19,452
Cotton spinners, sizers and yarn-beaters	18,790	766	18,024

TABLE IV.
Population by Pannas and Lams.

Pannas and Lams.	Population in 1901.
Imphal Panna or Town	67,093
Naharup Panna	22,451
Ahalup "	37,651
Laifam "	38,583
Khabum "	23,966
Khabum and Laifam "	535
Cachar Road "	786
Sekta Lam	19,576
Moirang "	16,823
Cachar Road "	7,636
Nongohup "	19,724
Awang "	15,148
Nangpak "	14,493
TOTAL	243,465

TABLE V.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

					Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai
1895 {	February	...	...	...	33	2½	10
	August	...	...	...	25	3	7
1900 {	February	...	...	...	39	4	12
	August	...	...	...	40½	4	9½
1901 {	February	...	...	...	28	4	17
	August	...	...	...	17½	4	12
1902 {	February	...	...	...	27	4½	11
	August	...	...	...	24	5½	11
1903 {	February	...	...	...	34½	7	13
	August	...	...	...	32½	7	10
1904 {	February	...	...	...	27	8	9
	August	...	...	...	30	5½	...
1905 {	February	...	...	...	33	8	13
	August	...	...	...			
1906 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1907 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1908 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1909 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1910 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1911 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			
1912 {	February	...	...	...			
	August	...	...	...			

TABLE VI.
Statistics of Criminal and Civil Justice.

	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
CRIMINAL JUSTICE.											
IN THE COURT OF THE POLITICAL AGENT—											
Number of cases tried ...	18	19	26								
" persons convicted ...	17	17	17								
" " acquitted ...	6	3	6								
IN THE COURT OF THE SUPDT. AND ASST. TO THE SUPDT. OF STATE—											
Number of original cases tried ...	69	115	111								
" persons convicted ...	84	195	170								
" " acquitted ...	31	51	43								
" " cases decided on appeal ...	8	9	14								
IN THE CHIRAP COURT—											
Number of original cases tried ...	35	70	90								
" cases decided on appeal ...	1	5	21								
" cases decided in the court of the town Panchayat }	29	40	52								
CIVIL JUSTICE.											
Number of civil suits instituted in the Court of the Political Agent }	78	138	220								
IN THE COURT OF THE SUPDT. AND ASST. TO THE SUPDT. OF STATE—											
Number of original miscellaneous cases instituted }	250	456	526								
Number of appeals decided ...	86	185	110								
IN THE CHIRAP COURT—											
Number of original cases decided ...	147	293	495								
" cases decided on appeal ...	58	71	181								
" cases decided in the court of the town Panchayat }	886	678	1012								

TABLE VII.
Finance.—Receipts.

	1892-93	1900-01	1901-02	1902-03	1903-04	1904-05	1905-06	1906-07	1907-08	1908-09	1909-10	1910-11	1911-12
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land Revenue ...	1,24,382	2,49,944	2,53,967	2,20,997	2,76,573								
Foreigners' tax ...		4,429	4,228	4,281	5,730								
Hill House-tax ...	30,721	52,809	63,566	51,294	45,742								
Fisheries ...	14,522	27,892	29,072	28,080	23,794								
Salt Revenue ...	13,255	6,976	8,539	6,527	5,824								
Forests ...	4,037	32,427	25,497	20,093	26,051								
Knbo Valley compensation	...	6,270	6,270	6,270	6,270								
Other sources ...	27,969	7,279	4,922	7,660	5,405								
Total ...	2,14,896	3,87,826	3,96,061	3,45,202	3,95,894								

TABLE VIII.
Outposts maintained by the State Police.

Place.	Force.	Place.	Force.
1. Kaopum ...	10 } Cachoar Manipur	6. Khangoi ...	12 } Tankul Hill.
2. Barak ...	4 } Road.	7. Powi ...	11 }
3. Makru ...	4 }	8. Sengmai ...	4 } Kohima Manipur
4. Shebong ...	10 } Tammu Road.	9. Kairong ...	10 }
5. Moreh ...	3 }	10. Mao ...	8 }

TABLE IX.
Statistics of Manipur Jail.

	1898-94.	1900-01.
Daily average population ...	84	72
Rate of Jail mortality per 1,000 ...	Nil	28
	Rs.	Rs.
Expenditure on Jail maintenance ...	6,274	4,626
Cost, per prisoner, on food and clothing, excluding civil prisoners	..	26

TABLE X.
Medical.

	1892.	1901.
Number of dispensaries ...	1	1
Daily average number of in-door patients ...	1	8
" " " " out-door " ...	23	28
Cases treated ...	2,621	8,371
Operations performed ...	...	236
Total income ...	Rs. 6,497	3,504
Income from Government ...	Rs. 390	735
Income from State Funds ...	Rs. 6,029	2,679
Subscriptions ...	...	...
Total expenditure ...	Rs. 6,497 (a)	3,504
Expenditure on establishment ..	Rs. 524	1,353
Ratio per mille of persons vaccinated ...	33.40	54.60
Cost per case ...	Re. 0-0-7½	0-1-5

(a) Includes Rs. 5,231 as expenditure on building and repairs.

TABLE XI.
Dispensaries.

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1900		1901		1902		1903		1904		1905		1906	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
Imphal ...	2,560	6,571	Rs. 3,504	8,371	Rs. 3,992	8,558	Rs. 5,767	9,171	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	

NAME OF DISPENSARY.	1907		1908		1909		1910		1911		1912	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
Imphal ...	...	...	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	

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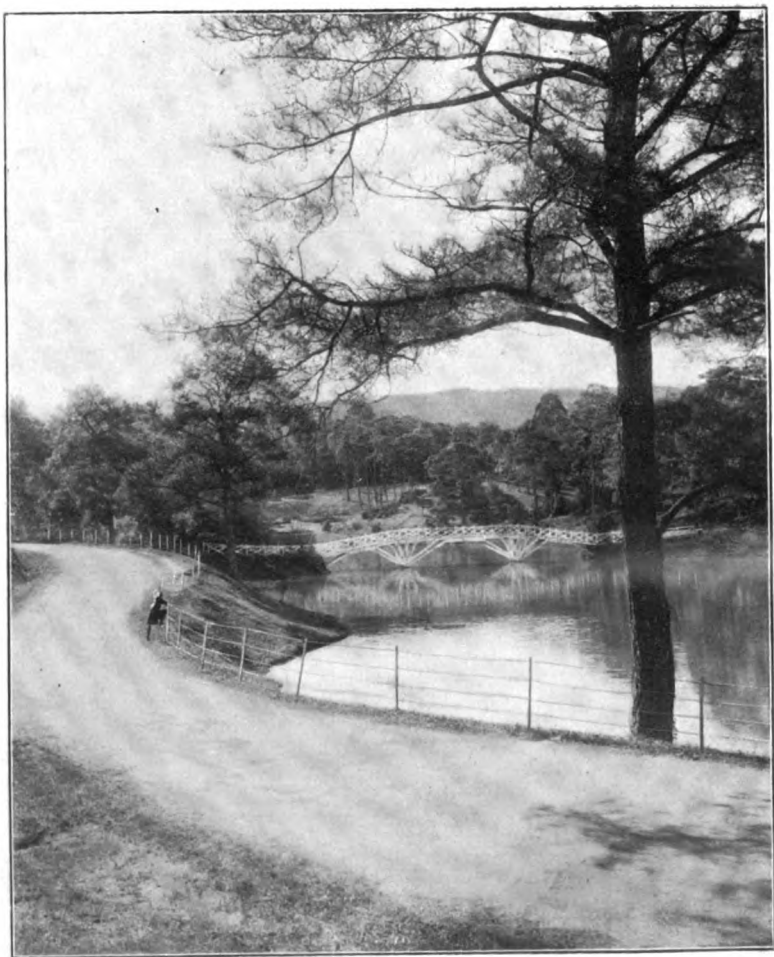
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THE WARD LAKES, SHILLONG.

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ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEERS.

VOLUME X.

THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS,
THE GARO HILLS AND THE LUSHAI HILLS.

BY

B. C. ALLEN, c s.

Allahabad

PRINTED AT THE PIONEER PRESS

1908.

Price Rs. 3.

Ind 7560.6



T. N. Hall fund.

PREFACE.

The tenth volume of the Assam District Gazetteer series contains the account of the Khasi and Jaintia, the Garo and the Lushai Hills. These accounts are necessarily brief, for little has been said of the interesting tribes by whom these districts are inhabited, as elaborate monographs on these tribes are now under preparation by officers who are intimately acquainted with their habits. The districts are sparsely peopled, apart from Shillong there are no towns, the system of administration is simple, and there is little of industry or commerce. There is thus but little for a Gazetteer to add to the tribal monograph. I am indebted to the various District Officers for their kindness in examining the proofs, and to Major Shakespear for his courtesy in criticising the account of the Lushai Hills, a district with which he was for so many years so intimately connected. It should be added that these Gazetteers were written before the partition of Bengal, and that wherever the word "Province" occurs it is to the old Province of Assam that reference is made.

SHILLONG :	}	B. C. ALLEN.
<i>October</i> 1905.		

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General appearance and mountain system—
River system—Places of interest—Geology—Economic geology
—Lime—Marble—Petroleum—Coal—Iron—Gold—Climate and
rainfall—Storms—Earthquakes—Fauna—Flora.

The district of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is situated between $24^{\circ}58'$ and $26^{\circ}7'$ N. and $90^{\circ}45'$ and $92^{\circ}51'$ E. and covers an area of 6,027 square miles. On the north it is bounded by Kamrup and Nowgong, on the west by the Garo Hills, on the south by Sylhet and Cachar, and on the east by the North Cachar Hills and Nowgong.

The whole of the district is composed of hilly country. On the northern and western borders these hills take the form of tumbled ranges, which run for the most part north and south, and have a general height of between two and three thousand feet. For the first 27 miles after entering the district the road from Gauhati winds its way amongst these jungle covered hills. The valley bottoms near the road have been cleared and cultivated by settlers, but elsewhere there is nothing but forest to be seen. The great trees are linked together with the coils and loops of enormous creepers, and on slopes that have been cleared for cultivation and left to fallow there is a dense growth of bamboo jungle. From the top of some of the higher ridges a fine view can be obtained over range upon range of hills to the blue plains below, but there are no signs anywhere of the handiwork of man, for this steamy

and malarious tract is very sparsely peopled. Twenty miles from Shillong the road emerges from the forest, and from this point to the southern frontier of the district there are rolling grassy hills and breezy uplands which have nothing about them to suggest the East. Patches of forest are still to be seen in the valley bottoms, and here and there a pine may be descried, the advanced guard of the fragrant woods that surround Shillong. Viewed from above there is something very beautiful about this open country. There are no peaks, or rocks, or ridges, but soft rounded hills covered with fresh soft turf which from a distance take on a delicate blue green tint, and look as soft as velvet. At Barpani, the road starts on a climb of 1,800 feet to the Shillong plateau, mounting through pine woods from which peeps can now and again be had of the beautiful gorge of the Umiam. From Shillong, again, there is another rise of about 700 feet to the high plateau, which stretches from there to the latitude of Dumpep and then gradually declines in height to the edge of the hills at Cherrapunji. Here and there an isolated hill rises four or five hundred feet above the general level, but the country as a whole consists of rolling grassy downs, intersected with river valleys which in the southern portion of the district take the form of precipitous ravines. The general level of the high plateau in the centre of the district is not much below 6,000 feet, though it decreases in height towards the east and west, and the wind blows keenly over these open downs. Further south the traveller passes with strange

rapidity from the temperate to the tropical zone. The enormous rainfall of this region has hollowed out the river valleys into deep ravines, and the hot moist air at the bottom of these gullies stimulates the growth of the most luxuriant vegetation. The road passes along near the summit of the cliffs, but from far below mounts up the roar of the river hurrying to the plains, and as the clouds of mist roll aside, a glimpse is obtained of the rich rank growth of a tropical forest. The bulk of the Khasi tribe live on the high plateaus. The northern half of the district, which consists, first of open rolling hills and further north of hills covered with jungle, is known as the Bhoi country, and the inhabitants as Bhois. These Bhois are for the most part Mikirs and Lalungs, with a sprinkling of Khasis and Kacharis, but Khasis do not thrive on these lower hills and do not care to settle in this malarious country. Between Khyrim and the Bhoi country live a small tribe called the Nongtungs (the stinkers) who seem to be a cross between the Syntengs and the Mikirs. The valleys on the southern face of the hills are known as the War country.

None of the hills in the central and southern portion of the district have anything of the rocky or precipitous about them. Their sides are covered with short grass, and from one direction or another they can generally be ascended by a man on horseback. On the summits of the higher hills there is often a fine grove of oaks, rhododendrons, and other trees hoary with lichen and antiquity. These groves possess a sacred character, and it is this

Principal
hills.

which has preserved them from the woodman's axe. The following is a list of the principal hills with their height:—

- (1) Rableng—height, 5,671 feet. (2) Sohpetbyneng—height, about 4,000 feet. (3) Sywer—height, 6,050 feet. (4) Shillong—height, 6,450 feet. (5) Dingiei—height, 6,077 feet. (6) Kyllang—height, 5,684 feet. (7) Laitblih—height, 5,800 feet. (8) Laitdera—height, 6,000 feet. (9) Thanjinath—height, 4,448 feet. (10) Nongjriong—height, 4,995 feet. (11) U-Mun—height, 6,221 feet. (12) Maoflang—height, 5,931 feet. (13) Maokaling—height, 5,900 feet. (14) Marpna—height, 5,600 feet. (15) Symper—height, 5,700 feet. (16) Maosngi—height, 5,810 feet. (17) Laitmarkhan—height, 5,313 feet. (18) Nongsynrih—height, 5,585 feet. (19) Maskuin—height, 5,306 feet. (20) Nongkrong—height, 5,606 feet. (21) Kyllai—Lyngsngun—height, 5,128 feet. (22) Maolihbah—height, 4,252 feet. (23) Patermylong—height, 5,755 feet.

**Rivers
draining into
the Surma
Valley.**

The high plateau that traverses the centre of the district is the watershed of the hills. The following are the principal rivers that flow towards the south into the Surma Valley. On the west there is the Jadukata, or Kynchiang, which rises on the southern slopes of the hills between Mawthadraishan and Mairang. It flows a tortuous westerly course, then makes a sharp bend towards the east, and debouches through a deep ravine on to the plains of Sunamganj. Its principal tributary is the Ka Blei which joins it from the west. Further east comes the Um Maopa, which rises to the west of the

Maoflang plateau, and falls into the Surma, a little to the west of Sunamganj. The Bogapani rises on the southern slopes of the Shillong peak, and flows westward and southward to the plains of Sylhet. The road from Shillong to Dumpep crosses it on a fine iron bridge, and the bridle path from Maoflang to Cherrapunji by a suspension bridge, situated at the bottom of a gorge of singular beauty. Near the plains the river passes the important village of Shella, and falls into the Surma a little to the west of Chhatak. The Mangot or Maheshkhali also rises near the sources of the Bogapani, but it flows eastwards and then southwards, and for a considerable distance forms the boundary between the Khasi and the Jaintia Hills. In the plains of Sylhet it is known as the Peine Gong. The Hari of Sylhet rises near Jowai and is known in the hills as the Myntdu. Other rivers that make their way towards the south are the Puang, and the Kaw Um or Lubha.

On the north the principal rivers are the Ka-Khri, which rises a little to the east of Mairang, and is known as the Kulsi in Kamrup. The Digru rises near Sohpetbyneng, flows westward crossing the Gauhati road, and then turns north. Near the boundary of the district it again turns east, crosses the Gauhati road at Barnihat, and finally falls into the Kalang near its confluence with the Brahmaputra. The Umiam rises a little to the north of Maoflang, and flows in a deep gorge between the Dingiei range and the plateau of Shillong. At Barpani it is crossed by the Gauhati road, and from that point takes a generally easterly course, till it finally

Rivers
draining
into the
Brahma-
putra.

falls into the Kapili. In the plains it is known as the Kiling. Further west comes the Umkhen which is known as the Barpani in Nowgong. The greater part of the boundary between the North Cachar and Jaintia Hills is defined by the Kapili, which pours its waters into the Kalang and so into the Brahmaputra. Its principal tributaries from the west are the Um Myntang and the Mauriang. The extent to which the waterways of the district are used as routes for traffic is discussed in the section on communications. These rivers possess the characteristics usually associated with hill streams. The bed is rocky and gravelly, the current swift, and after heavy rain even small streams come down in spate. In places the water comes foaming and roaring over huge blocks of granite—in places the river stretches out in still clear pools of blue green water. There are several magnificent cascades in the neighbourhood of Shillong, and at Maosmai, near Cherrapunji, some of the minor streams fall over a sheer precipice many hundred feet in depth into the gorge below.

**Places of
interest in
the district.**

There are several places of interest in the district which are fairly accessible from the station of Shillong. On the further side of the Umiang stands the Dingiei hill. Khasi legend has it that a tree once grew on the summit of this hill which over shadowed the whole world. The Khasis tried to fell the tree in order to let in the sun, but during the night the wood always grew again in the place where it had been cut away by day. After a time the people dis-

covered that every night a tiger came and licked the wounded part, and that this caused the wood to grow again with marvellous rapidity. The Khasis accordingly tied their daos edge outwards round the place, the tiger cut its tongue and forsook the tree, and the work was successfully completed. Heaven and earth were in those days very close together, and heaven was joined by an umbilical cord to the navel of the earth at Sohpetbyneng. When the tree was felled the cord was broken and the two worlds drifted apart from one another. There are two routes from Shillong to the summit of Dingiei. One is a foot path which drops straight to the gorge of the Umiam. For a height of about 1,000 feet on either side of the river the gradient is extremely steep, almost precipitous, and this portion of the path would be quite impracticable for a beast of burthen. By the other route the traveller can drive to Barpani by the Gauhati road, and from there the ascent is much more gradual and can be negotiated by a pony. On a clear day a magnificent view is obtained during almost the whole of the ascent from Barpani, over the rolling Bhoi country which lies some 3,000 feet below the summit of Dingiei. Dumpep, which is close to the high peak of Sywer, from which a magnificent view can be obtained on a clear day over the southern hills and the plains of Sylhet, is also easy of access. So is Maoflang, and from Maoflang there is a charming walk to the gorge of the Bogapani over 1,000 feet below. The river lies in a series of blue green pools connected with short rapids at the bottom of a ravine which recalls the passes on the Italian side of the Alps.

**The Kyllang
rock.**

From Maoflang it is a pleasant trip to the Kyllang rock. There is a bridle path to Mairang 15 miles away, where there is an inspection bungalow. From there it is about seven miles to the hill itself. The Kyllang rock rises out of rolling grassy downs, a sheer cliff of granite upwards of 700 feet in height. On the east and north-east the rock has been to some extent disintegrated, trees have obtained a foothold in the crevices, and the ascent is fairly easy. On the west and south-west it is a sheer dome, with an absolutely smooth and unbroken surface. The effect of this mighty precipice suddenly rising from soft, undulating grass land is singular to a degree, and the spectator cannot but wonder how this huge mass of rock ever found its way into such incongruous surroundings. The explanation offered is that the Kyllang is a gigantic specimen of a phenomenon which, on a very much smaller scale, is extremely common in the hills. Scattered about the whole granitic area are huge boulders of rock imbedded in, and of a similar character to the general mass, though much more highly indurated. The Kyllang rock is simply one of these boulders, but a boulder framed on a titanic scale.* According to Khasi legend the Kyllang rock was originally a man. He is married to Thadlasken, a small pool near Jowai, and when he goes to visit his wife violent storms blow across the hills. The Kyllang rock is also said to have fought with another conical hill in the neighbourhood called Symper and to have been defeated.

* *Vide* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. I, Part III. 55.

Jowai itself is well worth a visit, as the path there runs through charming scenery where grassy meadows and woods of oak recall the parks of England. At Wahjajer, a little to the west of Jowai, a path turns off to Nartiang, where there are remains of the Hinduism of the Jaintia Rajas, while the Khasi religion is represented by some of the largest monoliths in the hills. At Nongkhlih, near the borders of the North Cachar Hills, there are a great number of natural limestone monoliths, which viewed from the hill above look like the ruins of some regimental lines. From Bataw, 28 miles south-east of Jowai there is a magnificent view on one side, over the plains of Sylhet, on the other, across the hills and the gorge of the Myntdu. On the summit of the hill there is a large pond which is almost worthy of the name of lake, and the dense orange groves in the vicinity add much to the charms of a scene already beautiful.

**Places of
interest in
the Jaintia
Hills.**

Nongkhlah has historical associations of interest, and at this point the old Gauhati road crosses the beautiful gorge of the Khri river. There are hot springs on the right bank of the Kapili beyond Jowai. One of the springs is a pool of hot water about six feet square, the other is a sulphur spring which flows into the Kapili. There are springs also near Jakrem in the Maharam State about 14 miles as the crow flies beyond Maoflang. There are interesting caves at Cherrapunji, and also at Rupnath which is about two miles from the inspection bungalow at Syndai, 22 miles from Jowai on the Jowai-Jaintiapur path. Another cave at Lakadong was thus described by Mr. Ringwood in 1876."

**Hot springs
and caves.**

"A hole in the rock leads into a large cavern about 70 feet long, 30 feet broad and 30 feet high. At the further end is another arched opening, which is the entrance to another magnificent hall of beautiful proportions, and almost as regularly formed as if cut out of the rock. This hall is exactly fifty-six feet wide, about eighty feet long, and sixty feet high. It is oval in shape, and the entrance and exit are arched, and much lower than the roof, as well as being narrower than the width of the hall.

The roof is perfectly flat and oval, the sides are perpendicular and even. Passing through this hall, you come to a long passage about forty feet wide and thirty high, which after about 200 feet suddenly slopes down into the ground at an angle of about thirty degrees. The natives would go no further. Steam issues from the passage here, and the heat of the air is very great. Like all the other crooms, this very beautiful cave has evidently been formed by the falling in of the rocks over the limestone."*

These caves have not been visited by a European since the earthquake of 1897, and it is possible that their condition may have been much changed.

Waterfalls

A little to the south of Cherrapunji are the falls of Maosmai, where some of the streams from the plateau are precipitated over a sheer cliff several hundred feet in depth. Even finer falls are to be seen at Dainthlen and Noh-ka-Likai about two miles to the west of Cherrapunji. The name of the latter fall commemorates a woman, Ka Likai, who is said to have thrown herself over the cliff. Her husband was jealous of her love for her child by another man, and killed the poor little thing and served it up as a curry. The wretched mother, in her ignorance, ate freely of this horrid food, and on learning the truth committed suicide. There are also very fine cascades in the immediate neighbourhood of Shillong.

* *Vide Assam Gazette of January, 29th, 1876.*

The geology of a hill tract is too technical a subject to admit of adequate discussion in a Gazetteer, and those interested in the matter would do well to refer direct to the authorities.* The basis of the Assam Range, of which the Khasi and Jaintia Hills form the central section, is a gneissic rock. At its western end sandstones and conglomerates, which are referable to the cretaceous system, are superimposed upon the gneiss, and are themselves overlaid by limestone and sandstone of the nummulitic age. Further eastward, what is known as the Shillong plateau, rises steeply from the Surma Valley, but on its northern face falls away in a series of low hills towards the Brahmaputra. The gneiss is succeeded by the Shillong or transition series, which consist of quartzites, conglomerates, phyllites, and schists, through which appear granite and dioritic rocks. Upon this series have been superimposed sandstones and conglomerates of the cretaceous age, which contain occasional coal seams. These, in their turn, were overlaid by beds of the nummulitic or lower tertiary period, consisting of limestone and sandstone with interstratified shales and coal deposits. Along the southern edge of the plateau, in the neighbourhood of Cherrapunji, a group of bedded basaltic rock, known as the Sylhet trap, has been forced up between the cretaceous and the older formations.

* *Vide* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. I, Part II, pp. 99—207 ; Vol. IV, p. 387 ; Vol. VII, Part I, pp. 151—207. Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XVI, Part 4, p. 198 ; Vol. XVII, Part 3, p. 143 ; Vol. XXII, Part 3, p. 167 ; Vol. XXIII, Part 3, p. 120.

Mr. Oldham's
description
of the hills.

Mr. Thomas Oldham has left on record the following conclusions with regard to the geology of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.*

"I shall here briefly enunciate a few of the principal conclusions resulting from a general view of the previous descriptions of the geological structure of these hills. These are: that the general basis of the range is granite; resting upon it is a series of metamorphic rocks, gneiss, micaceous slates, quartz rocks, &c., which have been greatly altered, disturbed, and contorted by the granite which now supports them; that in connection with these changes there appears to be evidence to show that the line of greatest elevation caused by this granite, or rather by the forces to which this granite is the index, had a direction east and west. Subsequently to these disturbances and alterations of the older slates, these rocks have been subjected to long-continued and great wear and denudation; and upon their degraded surface was deposited a series of beds of sandy and earthy character, of varying composition, but in the aggregate, of considerable thickness, which have subsequently been subjected to great alteration. Another interval of considerable duration must now have occurred, during which disturbing forces were again exerted; for, upon the upturned and degraded edge of these schistose and quartzose beds, others have been formed of very different character, the prevailing composition of which is sandy, and which, as a mass, give abundant evidence of being shallower water deposits than the lower beds.

Again disturbances have taken place, contortions of these beds have been forcibly produced by the exertion of great forces of intrusion and pressure; and these forces appear to have been accompanied, if not produced, by the exhibition, on a considerable scale, and over a considerable area, of volcanic-like masses, which have been emitted in a highly heated condition, and have consequently exerted those modifying effects which might be expected to result from such an exhibition of heated masses on the large scale.

Above and upon these again, another series of beds of varying character, sandstones, limestones, and coal, of considerable aggregate thickness, was formed. Throughout the whole of this series, from

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. I, Part II, p. 168.

top to bottom, in the conglomerates found at its base, in the clean sandstones higher in the series, in the fossils found in these beds, in the irregularity of their development and the constantly repeated occurrence of current marking and "false bedding," there is sufficient evidence to prove that the entire group, not less than two thousand feet in thickness, has been deposited and formed in water of no great depth. The same evidence is extended by the organic contents of the limestones. To admit of this occurring, there must have been a gradual and continuous depression of the surface within this area, maintained during the deposition of the whole of the series. These sandstones have subsequently been invaded by igneous rocks which have been forcibly intruded among them, and have produced considerable alteration in their texture and structure. There is no evidence to show the exact period at which such intrusion took place; but it must have been subsequently to the formation of all the sandstones.

The whole succession of groups has been subsequently elevated until it attained its present position. There is no sufficient evidence to show whether this elevation, or rather, the commencement of this elevation, was synchronous with or not, or was caused by or accompanied by, the intrusion of the trappean rocks.

The elevation of the rocks to their present position must, however, have been gradual and long-continued, to admit of the remarkable conditions under which we find them as shown by the many detached and small outlying portions at considerable distances from the main mass.

Coincidentally with and subsequent to this elevation of the hills, *en masse*, the ordinary atmospheric causes of degradation, which, owing to the peculiar climatic conditions of the district, are here exerted with great force, have been in operation to produce and modify the present aspect of the surface. And, further, the action of these forces appears to have been determined, as to the *direction* of its maximum effect, by a series of lines of jointing and fracture, and occasionally of dislocation or faulting, resulting from the earlier intrusion of the volcanic rocks.

The very gradual and continuous slope of the plains at the foot of the hills, will show that long subsequently to the period of their elevation, a sea had washed their base, and formed the widely-extended flats, from which their steep escarpments rise."

**Economic
geology.
Lime-trade
in 18th cen-
tury.**

The geological products of economic value are lime, coal, iron, and petroleum, by far the most important of which are lime and coal. From the earliest days of British rule the lime quarries of the Khasi Hills formed one of the principal attractions of Sylhet. The lime trade drew a large number of Europeans to that district, and it is to the indiscretions of these persons that some of the earlier Khasi forays were attributed. Mr. Robert Lindsay, Collector of Sylhet in 1778, was largely interested in the business, and describes the sources of his wealth in most poetic terms. "The chunam or lime rock is washed by the rapid stream. A magnificent cataract was seen rolling over the adjoining precipice, the scenery altogether was truly sublime. The mountain was composed of the purest alabaster lime, and appeared in quantity equal to the supply of the whole world." Of the trade of the Sylhet district he observed that "the only great staple and steady article of commerce is chunam or lime. In no part of Bengal, or even Hindustan, is the rock found so perfectly pure, or so free of alloy, as in this Province; therefore Calcutta is chiefly supplied from hence. This branch immediately attracted my attention, and I was led to investigate how far the trade could be improved or extended. I found it had hitherto been occupied by Armenians, Greeks, and low Europeans, but to a trifling extent only; while I had so greatly the advantage over them, from the command of the currency, that it was evident the trade might soon centre with me, and it accordingly did so."

Mr. Lindsay's business experienced some vicissitudes owing to the violent conduct of the Khasi chiefs, but lime no doubt contributed largely to the fortune that he was able to accumulate in Sylhet.

At the end of the eighteenth century the lime trade of Sylhet seems to have passed into the hands of the Inglis family, who enjoyed a monopoly of it for many years. The founder of the firm was Mr. George Inglis who died at Chhatak in 1850 after a residence of 56 years in the district of Sylhet. A fine obelisk which stands on a low hill from which there is a magnificent view across the rivers and swamps of Sylhet to the Khasi Hills, marks the last resting place of one of the earliest of the British pioneers in the Surma Valley. He was succeeded by his son Mr. Harry Inglis who was buried at Cherrapunji. The family obtained possession of considerable zamindaris at the foot of the plains, and so strong was their influence that they succeeded in effectually excluding all outside opposition. The administration of the Khasi Hills in the early fifties, was not much hampered by the ordinary usages of law, and the complaints preferred against Mr. Inglis by his would-be rivals form somewhat curious reading*.

Litigation took place with regard to a lime quarry called Choon Chara, which was situated on the boundaries of Sylhet and the Khasi Hills and was claimed by the authorities of both districts as lying within their jurisdiction. Mr. Harry Inglis asserted a title to the quarry

Development
of trade by
Messrs.
Inglis & Co.

Difficulties
with which
other
European
traders were
confronted
in the fifties.

* *Vide* Report on the Khasi and Jaintia Hills by A. J. Moffatt Mills, 1853.

which he professed to have derived from one Sona Khasi, while two other gentlemen, Messrs Duncan and Gibson, laid claim to the land on the ground that they had leased it from the ex-Raja of Jaintia and another person. In the course of this dispute various charges and counter-charges of assault were made, and the young Lieutenant, who was discharging the functions of a magistrate in the Cherra court, undoubtedly acted in a very singular and arbitrary manner. Sona Khasi complained that Messrs. Duncan and Gibson had cut down bamboos standing on his land. Choon Chara had at that time been found by the Collector of Sylhet to lie outside the Khasi Hills, and the dispute was evidently of a civil and not of a criminal nature. In spite of this, the magistrate at Cherra, without issuing a summons, issued a warrant for the arrest of a Mr. Cattell, who was supposed to be connected with the business, and sent a strong party of police to seize his person. A magistrate was then sent from Sylhet to enquire into the question of the disputed boundary, but it is said that Mr. Inglis' men assaulted Mr. Cattell, even in the presence of the magistrate, and upset his boat. The Commissioner of Dacca ultimately decided that Choon Chara was situated in the Khasi Hills, whereupon proceedings were revived against Mr. Inglis' European rivals in the lime trade. They fled the district, but their servants were punished with exemplary severity, and the magistrate even proceeded to attach large quantities of coal belonging to the Company on whose behalf they had been acting

Mr. Mills, an Officiating Judge of the High Court of Calcutta, who had been deputed to visit and report upon the district, recorded the following observations on these cases :

Mr. Mills's
account of
these
transac-
tions.

" Mr. Inglis has the absolute control of the trade in the Cherra and Jaintia Hills, and through his connection with Colonel Lister,* his long residence at Cherra, and the extent of his dealings, has acquired unbounded influence in the country, and I am constrained to add that the Cherra courts have lost the entire confidence of the people. The state of feeling amongst the natives is such that no one would dare to bring an action or give evidence against Mr. Inglis. Every person I have conversed with spoke in this strain, and the proceedings of the court certainly strengthen the impression."

These are the restrained and temperate comments of a Judicial Officer of high standing, but the condition of affairs is described in a much more graphic and sensational manner by a Mr. Sweetland, a gentleman, who seems in some way to have been connected with the business, and who addressed Mr. Mills in a lengthy communication from Calcutta. He describes how Mr. Cattell's house was surrounded by a party of armed police from Cherra, and how he fled by night to avoid being carried to Cherrapunji. "It is a fact," he goes on to say, "that Messrs. Gibson and Cattell were obliged to fly to avoid getting into the hands of the Cherra authorities. Mr. Duncan fled before. I know beyond dispute that they were ruined; they state they fled for their lives; Mr. Jones is said to have done the same and to have died afterwards of a broken heart." 'Fled for their

* Colonel Lister was Political Agent in the Khasi Hills and father-in-law of Mr. Inglis.

lives' is a strong expression to employ, but Messrs. Gibson and Cattell did not hesitate to declare that they were unable to contemplate even a temporary sojourn in the Cherra jail with equanimity. Four days, they said, would have been enough, in that time they would have been no more. The jail officials were all creatures of the man with whom they had been contending, and from the unscrupulous way in which they had been treated, they augured the worst. The picture as drawn by Mr. Sweetland is doubtless overcoloured, but it seems clear enough that in the early fifties Europeans were not wanted in the Khasi Hills, and that the local magnate had effective means for making his displeasure felt.

**Rise in price
of limestone.**

In 1858, Mr. Allen, a Commissioner of Revenue, complained of the excessive price of limestone due to the practical monopoly enjoyed by Mr. Inglis. The total output of stone was placed at 17 lakhs of maunds, 15 of which were quarried by Messrs. Inglis, and the remaining two by a Mr. Sarkies and a Mrs. Stark. Limestone was selling at Chhatak for Rs. 180 the thousand maunds, a price which was said to be 50 per cent in advance of that ruling a few years before. Mr. Allen was much impressed by the inconveniences resulting from the high price of lime, and made certain suggestions for the abolition of the monopoly.* Nothing, however, seems to have been done, and in 1877 the Chief Commissioner

* Report on the Administration of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills by Mr. W. J. Allen, 1858, page 47.

addressed the Government of India upon the subject. The quarry leases had been put up to open auction, but Inglis and Company had bought them in, in many cases at fancy prices, and only worked a few of them. The price of limestone at Chhatak had risen to Rs. 385 per thousand maunds, an enormous advance on the price of twenty years before, though the cost of laying it there was said to be not more than Rs. 90 per thousand maunds.

Government accordingly decided to reserve one quarry for departmental operations, from which the wants of Government in Bengal as well as in Assam could be supplied. Three years' leases of the remaining quarries were to be put up to auction, subject to the proviso that not more than three quarries could be held in the same interest and that quarries which were not worked could be resumed.* The experiment did not, however, prove a success and the new restrictions did not have the effect of putting an end to the monopoly, as Messrs. Inglis and Company arranged to purchase the whole of the output of the lessees. In January 1879, eighteen quarries were put up to auction. Only five of these were actually sold, for a total annual rent of Rs. 23,410 as compared with the Rs. 40,975 which they had fetched under the old *régime*. The remaining thirteen, which had formerly fetched a revenue of Rs. 26,538, were again put up to auction in the following October, but only attracted bids with an aggregate total of Rs. 529. In March 1880, they were again put up, when eight were

Attempts to
break
the mono-
poly.

* File No. 46 J of 1878.

sold for Rs. 630. The auction system was so little satisfactory, that the experiment was tried of calling for tenders for the quarries. This proved a complete failure, and the leases were again put up to auction, but only a few were sold and the prices obtained were very low.* Unsatisfactory though this fall of price was, alike to Government and the seims concerned, it was no matter of surprise. In order to maintain their monopoly Messrs. Inglis had purchased quarries, which, on account of their inaccessibility or the scarcity of labour it would hardly have paid to work. In several cases they had paid exorbitant prices for the leases, as their value had been forced up by persons who bid them up, in the hope that they might be bought off. On the abolition of the monopoly these leases became unsaleable and there was a serious fall in the revenue derived by Government from lime.

The permit system.

A system was then introduced under which the quarries were thrown open to the general public, and royalty levied at the rate of Rs. 20 per 1,000 maunds of stone exported. In Khasi territory half of the royalty realized was credited to the seim. Coincident with the throwing open of the lime quarries there was a rise in the price of lime, and capital and labour were alike attracted to the industry. The natural results soon followed. The supply exceeded the demand, and the trade began to languish. Government accordingly decided to regulate the supply, and in 1889 most of the

* Letter No. 729, dated 19th May 1882, from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Revenue Department.

smaller lime quarries were closed. The Langrin and Nongstoin quarries were still held on rent by Mr. Inglis, and the Sohbar, Barpunji (Nongjiri), and Shella quarries were worked under the permit system. The western portion of Sohbar was leased to a Khasi named U. Don. Roy, and the eastern portion to Messrs. Inglis and Company. In 1894, Barpunji was leased for twenty years to Babu Jiban Roy for Rs. 3,000 per annum, and no royalty is levied at the present day on the stone extracted from that quarry. In 1899, a monopoly of the Uthma quarry, subject to the payment of the usual rates of royalty, was given to a European gentleman, in the hope that he would invest capital in the industry, but he did not renew the lease, which was for a period of one year only. The revenue derived from lime during the ten years ending with 1901-02 averaged Rs. 15,700 annually which was about one thousand rupees less than the average for the preceding decade. The total output in 1904 was about 123,000 tons of limestone.

The lime quarries are situated all along the southern face of the hills from the Lubha river on the east to the Maheshkhali river on the west. The actual quarrying of the stone is a comparatively simple matter, the difficulty lies in its extraction. The rock is generally trollied down to the banks of the nearest river and conveyed in small flat bottomed canoes over the rapids to Chhatak. The cost of boating is at all times very heavy, and quarries which are situated too far from a navigable stream, or which are cut off by too violent

**Site of
quarries
and cost of
production.**

rapids from the placid waters of the rivers of Sylhet cannot be worked at a profit. The removal of the limestone can, moreover, only take place during the rains, as in the cold weather there is not sufficient water in the rivers.

The following figures give a fair idea of the cost of extracting one thousand maunds of limestone in 1904. Quarrying Rs. 30, dynamite Rs. 2, trollying Rs. 10, boating from Therria Ghat to Chhatak Rs. 50, royalty Rs. 20. Total cost of 1,000 maunds of limestone at Chhatak Rs. 112; price obtained Rs. 120 to Rs. 130. The quarry men are generally Khasis, three of whom can extract 2,000 maunds a month, so that they earn about Rs. 20 per mensem each. Burning costs from Rs. 120 to Rs. 150 per thousand maunds, and lime sells at Chhatak for from Rs. 290 to Rs. 400 per thousand maunds. Freight to Calcutta is from Rs. 200 to Rs. 230 per thousand maunds.

**System of
manufac-
ture.**

The lime is burnt all along the banks of the Surma river from Chhatak downwards. The kilns are semi-globular in shape, and generally hold from 500 to 700 maunds of stone. Reeds from the marshes in the neighbourhood are used as fuel, and the stone is burnt for about four days and nights. There is a considerable waste of heat, as the European system, under which the burnt lime is withdrawn from the bottom of the kiln and fresh stone fed in at the top, is not in vogue. Kilns of this nature would, however, necessitate the use of coal as fuel, and coal would at present cost more than the reed jungle.

The following is a list of the lime quarries situated in the district. In the case of the quarries owned by seims or sardars half of the royalty realized is credited to Government.

Name of quarry.	Name of proprietor.	Name of quarry.	Name of proprietor.
Apnachara ...	Sardars of Maolong.	Nokriachara ...	Seim of Malaisohmat.
Barpunji* ...	Government.	Nongstoin ...	Seim of Nongstoin.
Bhowalchara ...	Seim of Bhowal.	Nongtalang ...	Government.
Borsyrmai ...	Sardar of Dwars Nongtyrmen.	P'athariachara ...	Seim of Bhowal.
Byrang ...	Government.	Phrang Karuh.	
Chunchara ...	Ditto.	Ramsemdem	
D'olaichara ...	Seim of Bhowal.	Rajki ...	Seim of Maharam.
Ishamati ...	Sardars of Maolong.	Rowai ...	Government.
Ka Long long ...	Sardar of Maodon.	Kupnath ...	Ditto.
Lamapushi ...	Government.	Shella† ...	Ditto.
Langrin† ...	Seim of Langrin.	Silaichara ...	Sardar of Dwars Nongtyrmen.
Lithangchara ...	Government.	Sinjura (in Dwara).	Ditto.
Manaichara ...	Seims of Maharam and Maolong.	Sinjura (in Malaisohmat).	Seim of Malaisohmat.
Maolong Mus-toh‡ ...	Sardars of Maolong.	Sohbar § ...	Sardars of Sohbar.
Mohishkhola ...	Seim of Nongstoin.	Tangla ...	Seim of Maharam.
Mokertila ...	Seim of Khyrim.	Umjindem ...	Sardar of Maodon.
Myrlipunji ...	Government.	Uthmachara ...	Government.

* Held on 20 years' lease which expires on November 30th, 1914, by estate of late Babu Jiban Roy, at a fixed rent of Rs. 3,000 per annum.

† Held on lease which expires on April 30th, 1907, by Babu Brajendra Kisore Ray, zamindar of Gauripur, Mymensingh, at fixed rent of Rs. 3,000 per annum.

‡ Worked on permit system.

§ The Komrah and Panitolah quarries in this group are worked on the permit system.

Dr. Oldham points out that much of the limestone **Marble** would produce most durable, and occasionally very handsomely veined, marble, which would be well suited for chimney pieces and other domestic purposes.

Petroleum has been found in the valley of the Khasi- **Petroleum** mara river, on the southern border of the district a little

to the west of Shella. A prospecting license, conveying rights over one square mile of land, was issued to a Syndicate represented by Mr. G. L. Garth in 1902.

Coal.

Coal is found both in the cretaceous and nummulitic formations. The largest deposits of nummulitic coal are found at Cherrapunji, Laitryngew, Maolong, Mustoh, Maosanram, Maodon, Thanjinath, Lakadong, and Narpo. Cretaceous coal is found at Maobehlarkhar (near Maoflang), Borsora (near Laur), Wapung, Leukensuiet, and in the Langrin field on the Jadukata river.

The Cherrapunji field.

The Cherrapunji coal fields have been twice described, by Dr. Oldham in Vol. I, part 2 of the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, p. 185, and by Mr. LaTouche, Vol. XXII, part 3 of the Records of the Geological Survey of India, p. 167. The following account of this field is condensed from these authorities. The coal occurs near the top of an isolated ridge between Cherrapunji and Maomluh. It was first worked in 1840 by Captain Lister, the Political Agent in the hills, who sent down about 8,500 tons to Calcutta. In 1844, Government transferred its right in the mines to Mr. Engledue, the Agent for the Peninsular and Oriental Company, but in the following year this gentleman made over his lease to Messrs. Gisborne and Company of Calcutta, who worked this mine for about two years. In 1851, they transferred their rights to Mr. Moran, but, as none of the lessees had worked the mines since 1846, they were resumed in 1859 on the recommendation of Mr. W. J. Allen. Since that time operations have

only been carried on in a desultory manner by Khasi miners. The principal obstacle to the exploitation of the seam lies in the fact that it is situated at a height of 4,000 feet above the level of the sea, and that there is no easy means of transport to the plains. Such coal as is extracted is still carried down the hill by coolies, and it is obvious that till a cheaper and more effective means of transport has been provided, the mines cannot be worked on any considerable scale. Mr. LaTouche calculated that the field contains about 1,200,000 tons of workable coal, though this is only a rough estimate, and the actual quantity may be either rather more or rather less. At present the field is worked by the Khasis in a wasteful and unsatisfactory manner, and Mr. LaTouche recommended that a practical miner should be engaged for a short time to teach the hillmen how to work in a systematic way.* A portion of the field lies in the territory of the seim of Cherra, a portion in the British villages of

* The following suggestions for working were made by Mr. LaTouche : -

A good plan of working the coal would, in my opinion, be to drive parallel galleries along the seam from side to side of the hill at a short distance from each other, which would ensure good ventilation, and then work out the coal in squares between these galleries, propping the roof where necessary, and when all had been removed, allow the roof over that area to fall in. There would be no extra expense in making these galleries over the present method of working, as they would be driven horizontally through the coal itself, and there would be little or no waste rock to be got rid of. The maximum length in any case need not exceed 600 yards, but at first they need not be made so long as this, as portions of the hill may be selected where the distance from side to side is not nearly so great. It is very important, however, that such work should be carried on under the supervision of a practical miner; otherwise great waste of coal is sure to occur, since, if the roof were allowed to fall in over any area before all the coal had been worked out, it would be most difficult and dangerous to reopen that part of the mine to get at the remainder. The system would be somewhat similar to that known as "Long wall" mining in England, but as the conditions under which the coal is found are very different from those of any coalfield in England, it would be necessary to find a man of education and intelligence sufficient to appreciate these changed conditions.

Maosmai and Maomluh. The subjects of the seim have hitherto been allowed to work the coal lying in his territory without restraint, an arrangement which is fatal to the proper exploitation of the measures. The British portion of the coalfield, in which no such right exists, has been properly surveyed and demarcated. The coal was analysed by Mr. Prinsep and gave the following results. Volatile matter, 37·1 per cent ; carbon, 62 per cent ; ash, 0·9 per cent. It is an excellent steam coal, and yields good gas and coke.

The Laitryngew field.

The Laitryngew, Maosanram, and Maobehlarkhar fields are described in the Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIII, part 3, page 120. The first named field is situated near Serrarim, and is estimated by Mr. LaTouche to contain about 1,000,000 tons of marketable coal, though it is of inferior quality to the coal at Cherrapunji. The Maosanram field is about 14 miles south-east from Maoflang, on the road to Shella. It was estimated in 1890 to contain about 63,000 tons of coal. A small quantity of coal has been extracted to supply the wants of the lime burners in the vicinity. The Maobehlarkhar field is situated about five miles from Maoflang, near the eastern edge of the Bogapani gorge. The field is estimated to contain about 52,000 tons of excellent coal, and is the source from which Shillong obtains its fuel. The price at Shillong, only 19 miles from the pits' mouth, is very high (12 annas a maund or 27 shillings a ton), but the coal has to be carried across the deep ravine of the Bogapani before it can be put in carts. The Langrin coalfield is situated in the south-west corner of the district

west of the Ka Blei or Jadukata river. It is described by Mr. LaTouche in Volume XVII, part 3, of the Records of the Geological Survey of India, page 143. The seam extends over an area of some 30 square miles, and, lying as it does at the foot of the hills, is fairly accessible, but it is only about three feet thick. The coal, like that in the Maobehlarkhar field, is of cretaceous origin. The Maolong coalfield was taken on lease in 1901 by a Limited Company. It is estimated to contain about 15 million tons * of good workable coal, which, like the coal at Cherrapunji is of nummulitic origin.

The Lakadong field is situated a little to the north-east of Jaintiapur. It was described by Dr. Oldham in the paper which has been already quoted, by Mr. C. H. Ringwood, Assistant Engineer, whose report was printed in the Assam Gazette of January 29th, 1876, and by Mr. LaTouche in November 1889.† Most of the coal is situated on the two plateaus of Umlotodo and Umat. Mr. LaTouche estimated that there were about 850,000 tons in the former field, and about 310,000 tons in the latter. Mr. LaTouche was, however, very doubtful as to the thickness of the Umlotodo seam, and recommended that before any capital was sunk in machinery or in improving the means of communication with the plains, its thickness should be tested by a series of small pits or borings. The Umat coal lies near to the surface and could be very easily removed. The best method, according to Mr. LaTouche, would be to sink

The
Lakadong
field.

* This is not an official estimate.

† Assam Secretariat File No. 48 R of 1889.

shallow pits at short distances from each other, and, on reaching the coal, drive headings from one to the other along the seam. The coal included in the area between these headings might then be entirely worked out, and the roof allowed to fall in. Some propping of the roof would be required, but there is plenty of suitable timber in the neighbourhood. The field is situated at about 2,200 feet above the level of the sea, and a road would have to be made to the plains at Barghat seven miles away. From there the coal could be transported by water. There are several other fields in the vicinity, which were described by Mr. Ringwood, but in none of them are there any very considerable deposits.

Coal is also found at Jarain, a little to the south of Jowai, but communication with the plains is difficult. A seam has also been discovered near the Shillong-Gauhati Cart Road, about eight miles north of Shillong. The following is a list of the places in which coal has been discovered up to date :—

Amwi.	Laitryngew.	Maosanram.
Bairong.	Lakadong.	Manaichara.
Barapani.	Lakhat.	Mustoh.
Bhowal.	Langrin.	Narpuh.
Borsora.	Malai.	Sahtynga.
Cherrapunji.	Leukensuiet.	Shella.
Dwara Nongtyr-	Maobehlarkhar.	Shermang.
men.	Maodon.	Sinai Maohynnrut.
Jarain.	Maolong.	Thanjinath.

Iron.

Iron is found in the form of a fine sand, consisting of minute crystals of titaniferous magnetic oxide,

which are irregularly distributed in the mass of the softer portions of the granite rocks and also occasionally in some of the gneissose beds. The upper portion of the granite is partially decomposed, and, when it is desired to extract the ore, the iron bearing strata are raked into a stream of water which is carried along the foot of the scarp on which operations have been undertaken. The ore is gradually washed out of the sand and other matter, and is smelted in a primitive furnace. It is either sold in balls, or is worked up into daos, hoes, and other agricultural implements. The process is described in a note recorded in 1885, which was published in a book called Notes on some industries of Assam, at the Shillong Secretariat Press in 1896. A good account of the iron industry will also be found in Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Volume I, part 2. The largest deposits of iron were found near Myllem, Laitlyngkot, Nongkrem, and the granite district of that neighbourhood, and more to the west, near Langkoi. The industry was at one time of considerable importance, and the remains of old workings are to be seen on every side in the localities referred to, but at the present day it is in a very languishing condition. The principal places at which iron ore is smelted at the present day are—Nongspung west of Shillong, Umphrup near Nongkrem, and Nartiang in the Jowai subdivision.

Traces of gold were found by Mr. Oldham in connection with the iron ore, but in such minute quantities that they would not admit of profitable extraction.*

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Volume I, Part 2, p. 207.

**Climate and
rainfall.**

Table I shows the average rainfall recorded at four places in the district. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills enjoy the distinction of containing one of the wettest places on the surface of the earth. The average annual rainfall at Cherrapunji, a village on the southern face of the hills, is no less than 458 inches. Enormous though this rainfall is, it is little more than half of the maximum on record. In 1861, 905 inches fell, 366 of which were assigned to July alone. The maximum for a single day was, however, recorded in 1876, when 41 inches of rain fell in 24 hours. The hills at this point rise straight from the plain, and the south-west monsoon, blowing across the flooded tracts of Eastern Bengal and Sylhet, is suddenly stopped by this barrier of cliffs. The air, which is saturated with moisture, rises, cools, and is precipitated in the form of rain. The village is situated on a plateau overlooking the plains, bounded on either side by gorges, and is thus completely surrounded with cooling vapour. Less than 5 inches of rain ordinarily fall in the four months, November to February, and nearly 300 in the three months June, July, and August. In spite of its enormous rainfall Cherrapunji is neither an unhealthy nor an unpleasant place of residence. The plateau is admirably drained, and the water is quickly carried off. Much of the rain falls at night, and the number of hours of sunshine is considerable. The Civil Surgeon stationed at Cherrapunji, in a report submitted to Mr. Moffatt Mills in 1853, stated that he had a high opinion of the climate of the Khasi Hills, and that an excellent site for a sanitarium could be selected either

at Cherrapunji itself, or at a place a little further to the north. He pointed out that the temperature varied little from the mean, the maximum in summer being 83° , the minimum, registered at sunrise in January, 43° . The rainfall certainly was heavy, but even of this the Civil Surgeon made light.

“During four months in the year a great quantity of rain falls at Cherra; on an average about five hundred inches in the twelve months. Nevertheless I do not consider that it rains here for a greater space of time, if so great, during the year, as it does at other hill stations. The two I allude to are Mussoorie and Darjeeling, with both of which I am well acquainted. When rain falls here it usually comes down in great quantities (as much as 24 inches sometimes fall in 24 hours); but in consequence of the hard and sloping nature of the surface, the station is perfectly dry an hour or two after the rain has ceased. Also the rain falls here principally in the night, as a proof of which I may mention that up to the present date (24th August) 348 inches have fallen this year; of this quantity 276 inches have fallen during the night between the hours of 6 P.M. and 8 A.M. and the remainder, *viz.*, 72 inches and 85 cents only has fallen during the day between the hours of 8 A.M. and 6 P.M.

Also Cherra is very much more free from being constantly enveloped in clouds and mist than the hill stations above alluded to generally are during the rainy season. From this circumstance and from the good coal fires kept here, a well built house with a good thatch is much drier than houses in the plains of Bengal are during the rainy season, as a proof of which, paper which was placed on a room four years since now looks as good as new.”

But, though the rainfall may not have a prejudicial effect upon the health of the inhabitants, its action on the physical features of the country is in proportion to its violence. This action has been admirably described

**Effects of
heavy rain-
fall.**

by Mr. Oldham, in the paper to which reference has been already made and from which the following extract is reproduced.*

“It will not be easy for those who have been accustomed to investigate countries where the average annual fall of rain amounts to thirty or forty inches, distributed with tolerable equality over the whole twelve months, to form a fair estimate of the immense forces brought into play in these hills, where the fall of rain in 24 hours is not unfrequently two feet six inches, or equal to the whole year’s fall in most places in Europe, and where the annual fall, not distributed over the twelve months but concentrated into four or five, amounts to some fifty feet, or six hundred inches!

I took an opportunity of visiting one of the streams in these hills after a heavy and sudden fall of rain. The water had then risen only about thirteen feet above the level at which it stood a few days previously; the rush was tremendous—huge blocks of rock measuring some feet across, were rolled along with an awful crashing, almost as easily as pebbles in an ordinary stream. In one night a block of granite, which I calculated to weigh upwards of 350 tons, was moved for more than 100 yards; while the torrent was actually turbid with pebbles of some inches in size, suspended almost like mud in the rushing stream.

To the denuding force of these heavy and sudden falls of rain is also due the almost total absence of any soil in the flats of the hills near the southern escarpment. All has, in fact, been washed away, and a thin crop of coarse grass alone finds sustenance on the rocky surface. The marked absence of trees, the growth of which is cut off as with the axe along the edges of every flat, is largely due to the same causes but also largely to the blighting storms which sweep over these hills. On the sloping sides of the valleys trees grow abundantly, and at many places luxuriantly: there they are sheltered, and abundantly supplied with moisture.

But this water exerts its degrading forces not only on the surface of the flats, or where, in rushing over the precipitous scarps it excavates deep basins beneath, but it pours through the many fissures and clefts in the sandstone and limestone, and springs from the solid face of the rocks at different levels, tearing with it fragments of the hardest masses, and precipitating them into the gorges below.

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 174.

The rapid degradation which these hills must undergo is well shown by the vast amount of suspended matter, which is carried down by the streams issuing from them during the rains. I have more than once seen streams which in the drier weather, were beautifully pellucid, so turbid and charged with suspended matter, that a white card was invisible at the depth of one inch and a half! that is, through a stratum of water of that thickness. I have also measured the bulk of such sediment allowed to subside in a carefully divided tube, and found it more than once to amount to one-fifth of the total bulk, and in one case to very nearly one-third. In all cases this sediment was a fine clayey sand. Taking these facts in connection with the enormous fall of rain, it will be readily seen how rapid must be the degradation and denudation of these hills."

Jowai, which lies north-east of Cherrapunji, also suffers from an excess of moisture, and the average rainfall there is about 237 inches. But these enormous rainfalls are by no means common to the district as a whole. The clouds are soon drained of their moisture, and, though Shillong is only 22 miles as the crow flies from Cherrapunji, the average rainfall there is only 82 inches in the year, a figure which, for Assam, is comparatively low. April is a drier month than is usual in that Province, and more than five-eighths of the total rainfall is precipitated in the four months June to September. The climate of the higher hills is exceedingly salubrious. There are no records of temperature available, but on the hottest days in summer the thermometer in a bungalow in Shillong seldom rises above 80° Fahrenheit. On the high plateau which extends from Upper Shillong to Serrarim, the temperature is appreciably lower, and it is cold enough to make fires pleasant on a wet evening even in the height of summer. In the winter there are often frosts at night, but snow

Rainfall in
other part of
district.

seldom falls. The total rainfall for December and January is only three quarters of an inch, and the advent of the rain clouds is generally accompanied by a rise in temperature. There was, however, a fairly heavy snowfall on January 9th, 1899.

Storms.

Destructive storms are practically unknown. Strong winds, however, blow from the west from the middle of February to the middle of April.

Earth-quakes.

The Khasi Hills like the rest of Assam is a seismic area, and slight earth tremors are so common as to excite little attention. Considerable damage was done to houses by a shock which occurred in September 1875, and widespread havoc was wrought by the great earthquake of June 12th, 1897. This earthquake was felt over an area of 1,750,000 square miles, from Rangoon on the south-east to Kangra on the north-west, and serious damage was done to masonry buildings over an area of 145,000 square miles.* The area of maximum disturbance was a tract of country of the shape of a cocked hat, whose base line ran from Rangpur to Jaintipur, while the top of the crown was near Barpeta. The first shock was felt at Shillong about 5-12 P.M. Its advent is thus described by the Deputy Commissioner. "The first shock, which was comparatively slight, was preceded by that rumbling underground noise since so familiar, but was accentuated within a few seconds with such severity that every masonry

* Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XXIX, page 52.

building in Shillong was levelled with the ground. The direction was roughly from south-west to north-east. The Secretary's residence on the hill above the Ward lakes, in which my wife and I were living, collapsed at once, as we stepped out upon the lawn, and the magnitude of the disaster was revealed immediately by the roar of the water escaping from the Ward lakes, which rushed down a ravine, and damming up the stream Umkra, destroyed the iron bridge leading to the polo ground, driving the heavy iron girders a considerable distance up stream." Government House was converted in a few seconds into a heap of stones, and the Chief Commissioner and his wife, who were seated in their dog cart under the porch, but narrowly escaped from death.

It was most fortunate that the earthquake occurred as it did, in the afternoon, when, after a wet day, nearly every one was out of doors. In spite of the collapse of every masonry building, there were only 29 deaths in Shillong, 10 of which occurred in the Secretariat Press. The only Europeans killed were Mr. McCabe, C.S., the Inspector-General of Police, and Mr. Rossenrode, a pensioner of the Survey Department. The sufferings of the people, who had suddenly been rendered homeless, were increased by the inclemency of the weather. Rain fell continuously for twenty-four hours, and people were compelled to seek shelter in huts, out-houses, and stables. Food, clothing, bedding, and all that goes to make life comfortable were buried under heaps of stones. There was a complete, though temporary, dislocation of the water supply, and this, coupled with the exposure and hardships

to which all were subjected, was the cause of much sickness. The telegraph line was broken, many of the bridges on the Gauhati road were wrecked, and for a short time Shillong was completely cut off from communication with the outer world. Telegraphic communication with Gauhati was, however, resumed on June 16th, and on the 8th of July the road was once more open to cart traffic. Outside Shillong there were 887 deaths most of which occurred in the villages which are situated in the deep valleys amongst the southern hills. These casualties were principally due to the falling of the hill sides, which carried the houses with them, or buried them in a shower of rocks and earth. The villages in which the mortality was highest were Shella (117), Laitiam (86), Nongwar (59), Cherrapunji (31), Maosmai (27), Sohbar (24), and Laitkynsew (19). Shella is situated on a steep slope overhanging the Bogapani, and the northern end of the village subsided in a landslide. Most of the other casualties were due to avalanches of rocks and earth, which buried the houses in the villages and the people working in the fields. Public health was bad for a year or two after the earthquake, but, except in the southern hills, the natives of the district lost but little. To people living in the neighbourhood of Shillong it was a positive source of wealth as labour for some time commanded fancy prices. The station was soon rebuilt and in a very short space of time there was nothing to suggest that such a thing as an earthquake had ever taken place. A full account of this terrible catastrophe will be found in Vol. XXIX of the Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India.

The fauna of the district include elephants, mithan **Fauna.** (*bos gaurus*) buffaloes, tigers, leopards, bears, probably *ursus torquatus* and *ursus malayanus*, wild pig, wild dogs, of which there are two varieties, the smaller and the larger, presumably *cyon dukhunensis* and *cyon rutilans*, the serow, which is, however very rare, and four kinds of deer called by the Khasis *ka sir*, *ka bthong*, *ka bthel*, and *ka skei*. Sir William Hunter states that wolves are found,* but it is probable that these so called wolves are only the larger variety of wild dog. Foxes, too, are occasionally seen in the hills. Small game include duck and teal in the lower valleys, black and marsh partridge, jungle fowl, dorick, woodcock, and snipe. In 1903 one person was killed by an elephant and 8 by tigers, and rewards were paid for the destruction of 1 elephant, 7 tigers, 30 leopards, and 40 bears. Elephants are captured either in kheddahs, or by what is known as *mela shikar*. In the latter case staunch trained elephants pursue the herd. The younger animals after a time begin to lag behind, when two of the pursuers come up on either side, and the mahouts pass a noose of strong rope round the animal's neck. For the purpose of elephant hunting the district is divided into ten *mahals*, which are put up at intervals to auction. In addition to the purchase price of the *mahal* the lessee has to pay a royalty of Rs. 100 on every animal captured. In independant territory the proceeds are divided between Government and the seims.

* A Statistical Account of Assam, Vol. II, p. 214.

Flora.

The following paragraphs on the flora of the district are based on notes received from the Director of the Botanical Survey of India.

The great undulating plateau, which constitutes the southern half of the Khasia and Jaintia range, is generally bare of trees, and the slopes of the hills are covered with grass. Here and there, however, occur open forests of the Khasia pine, often mixed with oaks especially *quercus fenestrata* and *quercus griffithii* in the western half and *quercus serrata* in the eastern. The flanks of the deep valleys and ravines intersecting the plateau are generally covered with the trees already mentioned and with other varieties such as *schima wallichii*, *castanopsis hystrix*, *evodia fraxinifolia*, as well as species of *ilex ligustrum*, and *cinnamomum*.

The broken hilly ground which forms the northern half of the district contains large stretches of dense evergreen forests in the valleys, in which nahor (*mesua ferrea*), dingnan (*schima wallichii*) *vatica lanceaefolia*, *castanopsis hystrix* and *castanopsis tribuloides* predominate, while other common trees are *engelhardtia spicata*, *stereospermum chelonoides*, *bombax malabaricum*, *lagerstrœmia parviflora*, *semecarpus anarcadium*, *careya arborea*, and *gmelina arborea*. Sal (*shorea robusta*) is found as far east as the Shillong Gauhati road. The broad ridges and spurs between the valleys are covered with high grass with clumps of forest here and there. The outer ranges of hills on the north are covered with bamboo and deciduous trees such as *dillenia pentagyna* and

gmelina arborea. Palms are abundant, belonging chiefly to the genera *phœnix*, *licuala*, *areca*, *arenga*, *calamus*, *caryota*, *chamærops*, *wallichia*. At higher elevation rhododendrons occur. Orchids epiphytic and terrestrial abound at all elevations and *sitamineæ* are very numerous. Above 5,000 feet are found species of such herbaceous genera as *raminculus*, *anemone*, *thalictrum*, *delphinium*, *geranium*, *potentilla*, *sanguisorba*, *astragalus*, *saxifraga*, *valeriana*, *senecio*, *pedicularis*, *primula*, *tofieldia iris*, and many ferns.

Dr. Hooker gives the following account of the vegetation on the southern slopes of the hills.* Dr. Hooker's account.

"Palms are more numerous here, upwards of twenty kinds being indigenous; the cultivated betelnut especially, raises its graceful stem and feathery crown, 'like an arrow shot down from heaven,' in luxuriance and beauty above the verdant slopes. This difference is at once expressed to the Indian botanist by defining the Khasia flora as of Malayan character; by which is meant the prevalence of brilliant glossy-leaved evergreen tribes of trees. Figs abound in the hot gulleys, where the property of their roots, which inosculate and form natural grafts, is taken advantage of in bridging streams, and in constructing what are called living bridges, of the most picturesque forms. Oaks, oranges, gamboge, diospyros, figs, jacks, plantains, and screw-pines are more frequent here, together with vines and peppers, and above all palms, both climbing ones with pinnated shining leaves and erect ones with similar foliage (as cultivated cocoa-nut, and Areca), the broader-leaved wild betelnut, and beautiful *Caryota* or wine-palm, whose immense leaves are twelve feet long. Laurels and wild nutmegs are frequent in the forest, with the usual prevalence of parasites, mistletoe, epiphytical orchids, ferns, mosses, and Lycopodiums; and on the ground grow ferns, beautiful balsams, and herbaceous and shrubby nettles. Bamboos of many kinds are very abundant, and these hills further differ remarkably from those of Sikkim in the great number of species of grasses."

* Himalayan Journals, Vol. II, p. 271.

According to Dr. Hooker the Khasi flora is, in extent and number of fine plants, the richest in India, and probably in all Asia. He and his companion collected upwards of 2,000 flowering plants within ten miles of Cherrapunji; in addition to 150 ferns, and a profusion of mosses, lichens, and fungi. There were 250 kinds of orchids, 25 of balsams, 20 of palms, and 150 of grasses. Wild apples, birches, and scarlet and white rhododendrons are found in the higher plateau, and in the tropical forest on the north there are figs, birches, horse chestnuts, oaks and nutmegs.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Khasi raids on Sylhet—Mr. Scott's march across the Jaintia Hills—Construction of road through Khasi Hills and massacre of Nongkhlao—Punitive measures—Submission of all the chiefs by 1833—The Khasi Seimships—System of inheritance—The Jaintia Hills—Risings in 1860 and 1862—Subsequent history—Archæology.

The history of our dealings with the Khasis and Syntengs will be found detailed in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir Alexander) Mackenzie, (pages 217-244), and need therefore only be summarised very briefly here.

We were first brought into relations with the Khasis by our occupation of Sylhet. The hillmen seem to have lived in a state of intermittent warfare with the Muhammadan fauzdar of Sylhet, and they did not abandon this objectionable practice, when that district passed into the possession of the British. The magnificent lime quarries in the hills near Cherrapunji attracted European traders to Pandua, which is near the modern mart at Bholaganj. Taken as a body these men were hardly calculated to raise the prestige of Englishmen in the eyes of the savage mountaineers, and some of the disturbances which occurred are ascribed by the Collector to their injudicious conduct. Raids and murders were by no means uncommon, and the Khasi

**Khasi raids
on Sylhet.**

problem was one of the most troublesome questions which confronted the Collector of Sylhet at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The subject is discussed at greater length in the Gazetteer of that district, to which it more properly belongs.

**Mr. Scott's
march
across
the Jaintia
Hills.**

It was, however, the Syntengs, as the inhabitants of the Jaintia Hills are called, whose country was first traversed by an official of the Company. When war was imminent between the British and the Burmese, Mr. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, entered into an agreement with the Jaintia Raja. In 1824, Mr. Scott marched from Sylhet into the Brahmaputra Valley across the Jaintia Hills, and, after the cession of Assam to the British by the treaty of Yandaboo, the linking up of the Brahmaputra and Surma Valleys by a road across the hills became a question of considerable importance.

**Construction
of road
through
Khasi Hills
& massacre
of Nong-
khiao.**

In 1826, Mr. Scott won over Teerut Singh, the seim of Nongkhiao, to his side, by promising to allow him to rent some land in the Brahmaputra Valley. This chief induced the inhabitants of the States concerned to authorise the construction of a road across the hills. Bungalows were erected at Nongkhiao, the work was pushed on under the supervision of Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton, and for a time nothing could exceed the harmony of the relations between the Khasis and their visitors. The savage is, however, alike treacherous and suspicious, and a chance remark let fall by a chaprasi, threatening the hillmen with taxation, is said to have been the spark that fired the mine. The Khasis invited

the British officers to a conference. Burlton, suspecting treachery, declined to go, but his comrade entered the assembly unarmed, and was forthwith put to death. Burlton defended himself in his bungalow with his small guard and when night came endeavoured to draw off his party to Assam. He was, however, followed, and after a prolonged resistance overpowered and his followers to the number of about 60 killed.

This wanton outrage called for speedy retribution. **Punitive measures.** Troops were quickly hurried up from Sylhet and Assam, and the Khasis were defeated and dispersed. The course of these operations are thus summarised by Captain Pemberton: "Captain Lister, commanding the Sylhet Light Infantry, with a mere handful of men, drove the Khasis from post to post, stormed their entrenchments, penetrated into their caves and fastnesses, and by the rapidity of his movements, and the boldness of his assaults, so completely destroyed the confidence in their own prowess with which they had commenced the contest, that they latterly confined themselves to attacks upon small parties of five or six individuals for whom they lay in ambush, and rarely ventured to contend openly with any detachment, however inferior to them in numbers."*

In 1831, raids were made upon the plains of Kamrup **Submission of all the Chiefs by 1833.** and of Sylhet, but they were promptly punished, and this was the last time the Khasis dared to descend upon our territory. It was impossible for a people, divided as they were, to offer any serious opposition to

*Pemberton's North-East Frontier, p. 225.

our troops, and in January 1833 the last of the important seims, Teerut Singh, tendered his submission. Teerut Singh was confined in the Dacca jail for the remainder of his life, but his state was handed over to his nephew and heir, and engagements were entered into with the other Khasi chiefs.

These engagements will be found in the first volume of a Collection of Treatises, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India and neighbouring countries compiled by Mr. C. U. Aitchison C.S. The general clauses, which are common to most of these agreements, acknowledge the authority of the Deputy Commissioner as the local representative of Government. The right to all minerals is surrendered, on condition that Government makes over to the seim half of the royalties received, and the seim undertakes to provide Government rent free, with all land required for cantonments, and sanatoria, and to give every assistance which may be required in opening roads.

**The Khasi
Seimships.**

There are altogether twenty-five of these little states in the Khasi Hills, and they are probably some of the smallest and most insignificant communities which have ever been dignified by such a title. Not a single state amongst the twenty-five has a gross revenue of Rs. 1,000 per mensem, and in no less than twelve the gross revenue is less than Rs. 1,000 per annum. The largest states are those of Khyrim, Myllem, and Nongkhlaio. The smallest is Nonglewai, which in 1901 had a population of 169 persons, who yielded to the

seim a gross revenue of Rs. 40 per annum. The following list shows the population, revenue, and principal products of these little states.

Bhowal.—The population in 1901 was 865, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 900. The principal products are rice, millet, bay leaves and black pepper, the most important mineral deposit lime. The title of the native chief is seim.

Cherra.—The population in 1901 was 8,155 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs 7,900. Coal and iron are found, but are not largely worked. Other products include potatoes and oranges, in which there is a considerable trade, cotton, millet, betelnut, pan, chillies, ginger, and honey. The title to the seimship of the state is disputed, and on the occasion of the appointment of a new seim in 1901 there were serious riots involving loss of life.

Dwara Nongtyrmen.—The population in 1901 was 362 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 100. The principal products are rice, millet, and oranges. The most valuable mineral deposit is lime. The title of the native chief is sardar.

Jirang.—The population in 1901 was 723 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 2,045. The principal products are rice, millet, ginger, caoutchouc, and cotton. The native chief is known by the title of sardar.

Khyrim.—The population in 1901 was 31,327 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 10,161. The principal products are potatoes, rice, millet, Indian corn, lac,

oranges, cotton and silk cloths, and iron hoes and bill-hooks. There are deposits of lime, coal and iron in the state, but they are not worked. The title of the native chief is seim.

Langiong.—The population in 1901 was 596 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 120. The principal products are potatoes and millet. The native chief is known as lyngdoh.

Langrin.—The population in 1901 was 1,138, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 2,050. The principal products are rice and millet. There are deposits of coal and lime in the state but only the latter is worked. The chief is known by the title of seim.

Maharam.—The population in 1901 was 8,464 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 1,570. The principal products are pepper, bay leaves, honey, rice, potatoes, millet, and maize. Lime and iron are found in the state, but are not worked, but imported iron is manufactured into hoes and bill-hooks. The title of the chief is seim.

Malaisohmat.—The population in 1901 was 491, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 200. The principal products are rice, millet, bay leaves, betelnuts, and oranges. There are deposits of lime in the state, but they are not worked. The title of the chief is seim.

Maodon.—The population in 1901 was 296, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 1,490. The principal products are millet, oranges, betelnuts, pine-apples, and bay leaves. There are deposits of lime and coal in the

state, but they are not worked. The native chief is known by the title of sardar.

Maoftang.—The population in 1901 was 947, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 145. The principal products are millet, rice, and potatoes. The title of the native chief is lyngdoh.

Maoiang.—The population in 1901 was 1,856, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 300. The principal products are potatoes, millet, and honey. Lime and iron are found in the state, but are not worked. The title of the chief is seim.

Maolong.—The population in 1901 was 1,472 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 1,800. The principal products are oranges, millet, betelnuts, and pine-apples. There is a trade in lime and the coal mines of the state have been leased for 30 years. The state is administered by a committee of three sardars.

Maosanram.—The population in 1901 was 1,414 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 2,930. The principal products are potatoes, millet, and honey. Lime, coal, and iron are found in the state, but are not worked. The title of the chief is seim.

Marriw.—The population in 1901 was 2,289 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 380. The principal products are rice, millet and maize. Lime is found in the state, but is not worked. The chief is known by the title of seim.

Mylliem.—The population in 1901 was 17,863 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 7,930. The principal products are rice, potatoes, Indian corn, and millet.

The manufactures are iron hoes and baskets. There are deposits of iron in the state, but they are not worked. The station of Shillong is situated in this state and seim is the title of the native chief.

Nobosphoh.—The population in 1901 was 1,555 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 500. The principal products are rice, maize, and potatoes. Lime is found in the state, but is not worked. The title of the native chief is seim.

Nongkhlah.—The population in 1901 was 9,715 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 2,300. The principal products of the state are potatoes, rice, millet, and maize. The only manufactures are iron axes and hoes. The native chief is called seim.

Nonglewai.—The population in 1901 was 169 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 40. The principal products are millet, rice, and potatoes. The native chief is called sardar.

Nonspung.—The population in 1901 was 1,859 and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 880. The principal products are rice, potatoes, and honey. Iron is found in the state but is not worked. The title of the native chief is seim.

Nongstoin.—The population in 1901 was 9,606, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 7,560. The principal products are lac, honey, cotton, bay leaves, rice, and millet. The manufactures include rough pottery, cotton cloth, bill-hooks, and hoes. Lime and coal are found in the state, but only the former is worked. The native chief is known as seim.

Pamsanngut.—The population in 1901 was 288, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 50. The principal products are potatoes and millet. The title of the chief is sardar.

Rambrai.—The population in 1901 was 2,697, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 550. The principal products are rice, millet, cotton, and maize. The chief is called sardar.

Shella.—This state consists of a confederacy of villages ruled by four officers called wahadadars, who are elected by the people. Many lives were lost in the earthquake of 1897 and the population, which was 6,358 in 1891, had fallen to 4,358 in 1901. The principal products of the state are pine-apples, betelnuts, and oranges, which prior to the earthquake were a source of great wealth to the people. In 1897 much damage was done to the orange groves by deposits of sand. There is a trade in lime and the Mustoh coal fields are of some value. The gross revenue in 1903 was Rs. 4,172.

Sohiong.—The population in 1901 was 2,014, and the gross revenue in 1903, Rs. 600. The principal products are millet, rice, and potatoes. The title of the chief is lyngdoh.

The chiefs of these little states are generally taken from the same family, inheritance going through the female. A uterine brother usually has the first claim, and failing him a sister's son. The appointment is, however, subject to the approval of a small electoral

System of
inheritance.

body, and the heir apparent is occasionally passed over, if for any reason, mental, physical, or moral, he is unfit for the position. The electors are generally the mantries or lyngdohs, the representatives of the clans which go to form the state. The seims derive the bulk of their revenue from tolls levied at markets, the rates varying from one pice to one anna per cooly load. Their functions are chiefly magisterial, and in the discharge of these duties they are assisted by their mantries. A detailed report on the right of succession in the different states was prepared by the Deputy Commissioner in 1903. In the winter of 1901-02, there was serious rioting at Cherra in connection with the disputes of two rival claimants to the seimship. The adherents of one of these men, Roba Singh, occupied the village of Cherrapunji, and the Deputy Commissioner had to proceed to the spot with a detachment of the 43rd (now 7th) Gurkha Rifles to restore order. On April 2nd and 3rd, 1902, the two factions again broke out, houses were burnt, and three men and one woman on the side of Chandra Singh, one of the claimants, were wounded, and one man was killed and two wounded on the side of Roba Singh. The ringleaders were, however, arrested without difficulty and Roba Singh was confirmed as seim of the state.

**The Jaintia
Hills.**

The Jaintia parganas in the plains of Sylhet were annexed in 1835, as it was found impossible to obtain adequate satisfaction from the Raja for the murder of three British subjects. When deprived of his territories in the plains, that potentate resigned his possessions in

the high lands, and the Jaintia Hills were accordingly incorporated in the territories of the Company.

The rule of the Jaintia Raja over these Syntengs was of the lightest. The only taxes he received were a he-goat from each village, a little rice and wood, and the labour needed for the cultivation of the Raja's lands. The bulk of his revenue was, no doubt, obtained from dues levied on goods passing from the plains into the hills, and from the hills into the plains. For the first twenty years of our occupation, though occupation it can hardly perhaps be called, the system of administration was practically left unchanged. The hill-men continued to bring in their goats, and their various disputes were decided by the local headmen. About 1850, some slight attempt was made to administer the country by the establishment of a thana at Jowai, and in 1860 it was decided to impose a house tax.

This was an incident of British administration that ^{Risings in} had no attractions for the people, and they forthwith ^{1860 and 1862.} rose in rebellion. A large force of troops was, however, close at hand, and before the revolt could make any head it was stamped out. The house tax was, however, closely followed by the income tax, which was imposed in 1860-61. Only 310 persons in the Jaintia Hills were brought upon the assessment list, and the total demand was less than Rs. 1,300. The tax for the first year was paid without a protest, but on January 17th, 1862, the stockade at Jowai was suddenly surrounded by a large body of men, who threatened to attack the guard. They dispersed on a few shots being fired at them, but on the 23rd a

riotous mob once more assembled and burnt down the thana. Troops were then gradually brought into the hills. The rebels stockaded themselves in their villages, and these positions were then carried by the troops. There was little loss as a rule on either side, as, as soon as the sepoys had succeeded in forcing their way into the stockade, the Syntengs disappeared into the jungle. There was never any opportunity of striking a decisive blow, and it was not till November 1863 that the last of the insurgents had surrendered. An account of the proceedings will be found in the selections from the Records of the Government of Bengal, Vol. XXXIX, but the story of this indecisive guerilla warfare is of no particular interest at the present day.

**Cause of
rising.**

The impatience of the hillmen of restraint seems to have been the main cause of the rising. The rule of their own Raja had been of the lightest. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the Jaintia Raja had owned himself the vassal of the Ahom king, but he had been unable to carry his own people with him. He submitted, but they rose as one man and massacred the Ahom garrisons that had been posted in the hills. After the Jaintia Raja had abandoned his possessions in the highlands, we left the people practically undisturbed for a quarter of a century. The only representative of the British Government was the thanadar, and all that Government did for the people was to tax them, though the imposts levied were certainly of the lightest. The Syntengs had never been conquered, and had no conception of the resources of the Indian

Empire. The Jaintia Hills had been British territory for a generation, but it had been British only in name. As long as the people were left entirely to their own devices, they had no excuse for giving any trouble, but they were prompt to resent anything so offensive as taxation. Since 1863, a European officer has been stationed in the Jaintia Hills, and the Syntengs have never on any occasion been the cause of any anxiety to the Administration.

The subsequent history of the district has been un- **Subsequent history.**
eventful, and the only incident of importance that has occurred is the great earthquake of 1897, which has already been described. After the suppression of the Khasi rising in 1833, Captain Lister was appointed to the political charge of the hills, and his headquarters were located at Cherrapunji. This place remained the headquarters of the district till 1864 when they were removed to the drier plateau of Yeodo at the foot of the Shillong range. In 1874, when Assam was formed into a separate Province under a Chief Commissioner, Shillong was selected as the headquarters for the new Administration.

There are no remains of archæological interest in the **Archæology.**
hills, apart from the memorial stones of the Khasis, and the monuments erected in memory of a few Europeans. The Khasi monoliths are a prominent feature in the landscape in almost every portion of the district. They are generally arranged in rows, varying in number from three to nine. The centre stone is invariably the tallest

and is sometimes crowned with a piece of stone the size and shape of a plate. A flat table like stone, supported on small pillars about one foot high, is placed in front of each group of three monoliths, and for each extra pair of monoliths there is an additional flat stone.

Some of these monoliths are of enormous size. At Nartiang there is a stone which is 26 feet 6 inches high, 6 feet 9 inches wide, and 2 feet 3 inches thick. These memorial stones fall into two classes, those which are elected by the family or clan in memory of their ancestors, and those erected by children in honour of their parents. They are generally placed near paths where they will be continuously in the public eye, and are often far away from the place where the ashes of the person in whose honour they have been erected, are buried. At Cherrapunji there are several fine platforms built of solid masonry on which the seims of the Cherra State, or their near relations, have been burned. There is a large obelisk of solid masonry in Cherra station, erected to the memory of Mr. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, and an almost equally imposing monument, a little to the north of the village, which commemorates an old Khasi woman who died in 1903. At Nongkhlaoh there is a monument to Lieutenants Bedingfield and Burlton, who were murdered by the Khasis in 1829, and at Shillong there is a monument erected in memory of the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Quinton, and the other officers who were killed during the disturbances in Manipur in 1891.

CHAPTER III. POPULATION.

Area and density—Towns and villages—Growth of population—
Migration—Sex—Marriage—Infirmities—Language—Caste and
tribe—The Garos—The Khasis and Syntengs—The Lalungs—
The Mikirs—Religion—Animism—Christianity—Other reli-
gions—Occupations.

The area of the district is 6,027 square miles, the **Area and density.**
population in 1901 was 202,250, and the density is thus
34 to the square mile. The density in the two sub-
divisions of Shillong or the Khasi Hills, and Jowai or
the Jaintia Hills is practically identical. Figures are
not available for any minor unit, but the bulk of the
population is probably living in the central and southern
portions of the hills.

The district contains one small town, Shillong, and 1,839 **Towns and villages.**
villages. These villages are quite unlike the fortified
posts which are occupied by the Nagas on the east.
Head hunting, with all its attendant horrors, was unknown
even before our occupation of the country, and there was
nothing to keep the population together. The result is
that nearly all these villages are small hamlets with less
than 500 inhabitants and in many of them there are not
more than three or four houses,

**Growth of
population.**

Mr. Mills, in 1853, reported that the population of the district was estimated to be 119,000 souls. The abstract in the margin shows the population recorded in 1872 and at the subsequent enumerations, and the percentage of increase in each

Population.	Per- centage variation.
1872 ... 140,356	
1881 ... 167,804	+19.5
1891 ... 197,914	+17.9
1901 ... 202,250	+2.1

decade. A synchronous census in these hills has up to the present day been found impossible, and a part of the large increase that occurred prior to 1891 was possibly due to the perfecting of the machinery of enumeration. The great earthquake of 1897 was chiefly responsible for the want of progress during the last decade of the century. Less than a thousand people were actually killed, but the earthquake was succeeded by a period of exceptional unhealthiness. It was followed by incessant rain, and owing to exposure, anxiety, want, and bad food, dysentery and fever were prevalent throughout the district. The water-supply seems to have been in some way affected, and bowel complaints were unusually common. The Reverend Dr. John Roberts, whose experience of the district extended over nearly thirty years, reported that he had never seen such a high mortality as occurred in 1898 and 1899. The earthquake was also followed by a marked decline in the birth rate, a fact which received ample confirmation from the census tables. In the Khasi Hills the increase was less than one per cent, but in the Jowai subdivision, where the effects of this great disturbance were not so severe, it was over five per cent.

There is very little movement into or out of the hills, **Migration.** and over 96 per cent of the persons censused there in 1901 had been born within the boundaries of the district. There were less than 4,000 immigrants from other districts of the Province, nearly 1,300 of whom came from Sylhet, while Kamrup and the Garo Hills accounted for about half of the remainder. More than three-fourths of the foreigners, or persons born outside the Province, were living in Shillong. Further details with regard to immigration will be found in Table III.

Women in the hills considerably exceed the men in **Sex.** numbers, and in 1901 there were 1,080 females to every 1,000 males. Were it not for the foreign population the proportion would have been much higher, as amongst the Khasi and Synteng tribe there are 1,143 women to every 1000 men. Amongst the Garos and Mikirs who were living in the district, the men slightly exceeded the women in numbers. Women amongst the Khasis enjoy a position of unusual dignity and importance. Inheritance is traced entirely through the female line, women and girls move about as freely and enjoy quite as full a life as men, and their numbers are not reduced, as in some other parts of India, either by premature parturition or neglect.

The following is a brief description of the marriage **Marriage.** customs of the Khasis. For further details reference should be made to the monograph on the tribe.

At a marriage the parties are pronounced man and wife in the presence of their friends, and a feast usually

follows. The essential part of the ceremony consists of the mixing of liquor from two different gourds, representing the two contracting parties, and the eating by the bride and groom out of the same plate. The bride at first remains in her mother's house, where she is visited by her husband, but when children are born, the parents, if they continue satisfied with one another, set up housekeeping together. This union between the sexes is, however, hardly worthy of the name of marriage as it can be terminated at will by the contracting parties, and, as the initial ceremony costs but little, a man is not deterred from changing his wife by the expense of obtaining a new partner. Divorce is very common, and is effected by a public declaration, coupled with the presentation by the man to the woman of five cowries or copper coins, which she returns to him with five similar coins of her own. He then throws them away, and the whole ceremony is complete. The public proclamation is occasionally dispensed with, and the marriage is dissolved by the simple tearing of a pan leaf. The temporary character of the Khasi marriages can be judged from the fact that one man, who did not look more than 35 or 40 years of age, admitted to a missionary that he had been married 37 times. In such cases the women remain in their own homes, and suffer no material inconvenience from the departure of their fickle husbands. The facility with which divorce can be obtained renders adultery or intercourse prior to marriage, uncommon. Marriage, in fact, is merely a union of the sexes, dissoluble at will, and the people have no

temptation to embark on secret intrigues. A woman who commits adultery is, moreover, regarded with extreme disfavour, and according to the Khasi code of morals, there is only one thing worse, and that is to marry in one's own clan. A widow is allowed to remarry, but not into the family of her late husband, a practice exactly the converse of that prevailing in the Garo Hills, to the west. Infant marriage is practically unknown, and in 1901 out of the 38,000 married women in the district only 516 were less than 15 years of age. The proportion of potential mothers, *i.e.*, married women between 15 and 40 is comparatively small. In 1901, they formed only 144 per mille of the total population, as compared with 157 per mille in the Province as a whole, and 169 per mille in the Central Provinces.

The abstract in the margin shows out of 10,000 males **Infirmities.**

	Out of 10,000 males number afflicted with—				the number in the
	Blindness,	Deaf- mutism.	Leprosy.	Insan- ity.	
Khasi and Jaintia Hills	14	6	6	3	Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Assam, and
Assam ...	10	9	13	5	the Indian Empire
India ...	12	6	5	3	afflicted with the

four special infirmities selected for record at the census. Blindness is the only infirmity which is at all common. The proportion of blind people has always been higher in the hills than in the valley, and it is probable that the confined and smoky atmosphere of the hillman's hut has an injurious effect upon the eyes. The district has always been unusually free from leprosy. This is somewhat noteworthy as large quantities of dried but

most malodorous fish are imported into it from Sylhet, and, according to Doctor Jonathan Hutchinson, it is to fish of this description that leprosy is largely due.

Language.

The principal languages spoken in the hills are Khasi, which in 1901 was returned by 59 per cent of the population, Synteng, which is closely akin to it (27 per cent), and Mikir (6 per cent). Khasi and Synteng are said to belong to the Mon-Khmer family to which Mon-Palaung and Wa belong. At the present day these languages are spoken in Pegu, in the hilly country near the Mekhong, and in Cambodia. In Assam this special form of speech is only found in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and nearly all the other aboriginal languages with which it is surrounded belong to the great Bodo family. The Mon-Khmer languages have something in common with the Munda family, and, though it would be too much to say that they have a common origin, they have a common substratum over which have settled layers of other speech. Garo is a member of the Bodo group and Mikir occupies an intermediate position between the Bodo and the Naga languages. For further details with regard to these various forms of speech reference should be made to the Linguistic Survey of India by Dr. Grierson.

**Caste and
Tribe.**

From the racial point of view the population of the district is extraordinarily homogeneous. Khasis, Syntengs, and Native Christians, who are all practically one tribe, form 85 per cent of the total population, Mikirs form 6 per cent, Garos 3 per cent, and Lalungs another Bodo people, 2 per cent.

The Garos are members of the great Bodo family, and **The Garos.**

Males	...	...	3,001	are akin to the Kacharis,
Females	...	...	2,767	Rabhas, Meches, and cognate

tribes. They are said to be a section of the Thibeto-Burman race, whose original habitat, it has been suggested, was the country near the upper waters of the Yang-tse-kiang and Ho-ang-ho, and who spread in successive waves of immigration over the Assam Valley. Though akin to most of the aboriginal tribes of the Assam Valley, they belong to quite a distinct stock to that from which the Khasis sprang. According to their own traditions they came from Thibet and settled in Kuch Behar. Here they lived for about 400 years, but were finally driven southwards into the hills which bear their name. In appearance the Garos are squat and sturdy, with oblique eyes, large head, thick lips, and large and ugly features which have a peculiarly flattened appearance. Their costume is of the scantiest. The men wear a narrow cloth which is passed between the legs and fastened round the waist, and which does not really cover the part it is intended to conceal. The woman's cloth, which is of the scantiest description, is fastened round the body below the navel, and only reaches a few inches down the thigh. But what they save in clothing they spend in jewellery, and there are few women in the world who are so prodigal in earrings, though it is for quantity not quality that they are conspicuous. Girls will sometimes wear in a single ear as many as 60 brass rings, each $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference and weighing altogether nearly 2lbs. The result of this

custom is that the lobes are enormously distended, and the bottom of the ear almost reaches to the shoulder. The Garos live as a rule in long houses built of bamboo, and are most omnivorous feeders. The tribe is divided into certain local groups called *jals*, and the Garos who have settled amongst and intermarried with the Khasis are known as Migams. A more detailed account of the Garos and their customs will be found in the monograph on that tribe.

**The Khasis
and Syntengs.**

The Khasis and Syntengs are a short and sturdy race.

Males	...	...	72,492
Females	...	...	82,906

They have flat noses, thick lips, eyes which are generally obliquely set, and fair complexions. Their language differentiates them from the other tribesmen of Assam, and their indifference to tradition and readiness to accept new customs, is a dividing line which separates them from the other peoples of India. A detailed monograph on the tribe is under preparation by Major Gurdon, the Deputy Commissioner of the district, and, as they form the great bulk of the population of the district, their manners and customs will be found described in the appropriate sections of the Gazetteer.

The Lalungs.

The Lalungs are a Bodo tribe, the great bulk of whom

Males	...	...	1,582
Females	...	...	1,679

are living in Nowgong. A certain number of Lalung villages are, however, to be found in the hills to the north of the Jowai subdivision. Most of the tribal legends describe them as having been originally located in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and as moving into the

plains because they disliked the principle laid down by the Khasis that all property should descend through the female. According to another tradition they were originally settled near Dimapur, but moved into the hills to escape the disagreeable duty of providing the Kachari Raja with a daily ration of six seers of human milk. The tribe is divided into a number of clans whose names suggest a totemistic origin, and all of which, except the Masorang, are exogamous. The rule of inheritance is peculiar. A woman may either enter her husband's clan, or the husband may enter the wife's, but all property and children of the marriage belong to the clan which was adopted at the time of the wedding. In the days of native rule the Lalungs are said to have offered eight human victims annually to their gods.

According to Colonel Dalton, the Mikirs were origi- **Mikirs.**

Males	...	...	6,583	nally settled in the North
Females	...	...	6,260	Cachar Hills, but were
				driven westward into Jain-

tia territory by the Kacharis. Dissatisfied with the reception accorded to them there, they sent an embassy to the Ahom governor at Raha, offering to place themselves under the protection of his master. But the luckless delegates were unable to make themselves understood and they were, forthwith, buried alive in a tank which that officer happened to be excavating. Hostilities ensued, but the Mikirs were soon suppressed, and were settled in the hills that bear their name, though a considerable colony are still

to be found in south Kamrup and the northern slopes of the Khasi Hills. They are divided into four tribes—Chintong, Ronghang, Amri, Dumrali—and these tribes are again subdivided into various exogamous groups. In the hills the Mikirs live by *jhum* or shifting cultivation and raise crops of cotton, chillies, rice, and vegetables. All the members of a family live in one house, which is thus of considerable size. Their religion is of the usual animistic type, and is chiefly concerned with the propitiation of evil spirits. Infant marriage is unknown, and sexual license within the tribe prior to marriage is tolerated. Further information with regard to the Mikirs will be found in the monograph on that tribe.

Religion.

Classified by religion the population of the district in 1901 was distributed as follows:—Animistic 88·2 per cent, Christians 8·5 per cent, Hindus 2·7 per cent, and Muhammadans 0·6 per cent.

The natural religion of the Khasis does not differ in essentials from that of the other tribesmen of Assam. They believe in a future state, but do not trouble themselves much about it. Misfortunes are attributed to evil spirits, and steps are at once taken to ascertain who it is who is offended and how he best may be propitiated. Egg-breaking is the system of divination usually employed, and is thus described by Mr. Shadwell:—

“ Each case of sickness or other calamity is attributed to the influence of some evil spirit, and the first step is to ascertain what particular spirit has been at work, and for this the great institution of egg-healing is brought into play. An expert (but not a professional) sits down before a board, in the centre of which he places an egg on a few grains of rice; after invoking the egg to

speak the truth, he sweeps the rice off the board, excepting one grain left on any spot fancy dictates. Then naming a particular spirit, he asks that if he be the cause of evil, a part of the shell of the egg may be deposited near the grain of rice; he then strikes the egg sharply on the centre of the board. This process is repeated, if necessary, till the required information is obtained. The next thing is to discover what sort of offering will be acceptable to the spirit. This is ascertained in a precisely similar way, but the desired result is often not arrived at till much time and many eggs have been expended."

A Khasi will not start on a journey or undertake any business of importance, without first ascertaining by this means whether the result is likely to be favourable.

The Khasis recognize a principal god or creator, to whom a cock or goat should be sacrificed each year. The ancestors of the family and clan are also worshipped, but the whole question of the religion and customs of the Khasis is discussed at length in the monograph on the tribe, so that any detailed disquisition here would be out of place. One of their superstitions is, however, so curious that it cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed. The tradition runs that there was once in a cave near Cherrapunji a gigantic snake or *thlen*, which caused great havoc amongst men and animals. At last, one man, more venturous than his fellows, took with him to the cave a herd of goats, and offered them one by one to the monster. The snake soon learnt to open its mouth to be fed at a given signal, and the man then made a lump of iron red hot, threw it into its mouth, and killed it. The body was then cut up and eaten, but one small piece remained, from which sprang a multitude of *thlens*. These *thlens* attach themselves to different families, and bring wealth

and prosperity, but only if they are from time to time fed on human blood. To satisfy this craving a human being must be killed, and the hairs, the tips of the fingers, and a little blood offered to the snake. Many families are known or suspected to be *Ri thlen*, or keepers of the *thlen*, and murders are not unfrequently committed in consequence of this awful superstition. Another quaint superstition which exists among the Syntengs is that of *Taro*, or the casting out of the devil. In olden days a person who considered that his persistent ill-fortune was due to the presence of some malignant spirit in his house, threw all his property out of doors and abandoned it, in the hope that the devil would go with his goods and chattels. At the present time such a person contents himself with throwing away one or two worthless articles.

Christianity. The Khasis have, however, shown themselves peculiarly susceptible to the influences of Christianity. The Welsh Calvinistic Methodists opened a mission in the hills in 1841. During the first quarter of a century they made very little progress, and by 1871 they had only succeeded in converting about 500 persons. The work then received a great impulse from the labours of the Reverend Jerman Jones and Dr. Griffiths, a medical missionary, and the number of converts grew apace. In 1881, there were 1,895 Native Christians in the district, in 1891, there were 6,941, and in 1901, no less than 17,125. Classified by sect, the mission had, according to the census returns, 1,796 converts in 1881, 6,766 in 1891, and 15,937 in 1901. In 1905, according to their own returns, the missionaries

had a following of about 23,000 souls, while from 1,000 to 1,500 converts are annually admitted into the church. The process of conversion originally seems to have been fairly logical. The Khasis ascribed most of their misfortunes, physical and material, to the agency of evil spirits, and their religion largely consists of the propitiation of these demons. When they found that the medicines of the early medical missionaries did them more good than their ancestral pujahs, they were inclined to question the truth of their own beliefs. The Khasi religion in itself possesses few attractions, and there are no ties of caste or social or family restrictions to act as an obstacle to conversion. On the other hand, the fact that converts are debarred from attending markets on a Sunday, that they are deprived of the benefit of unrestricted divorce, and that drunkenness is forbidden, acts as a deterrent to the less spiritually minded members of the tribe. The Christians are, however, the most prosperous and the most civilized section of the community, and this is a fact which is bound to exercise a great influence upon the people. It would hardly be too much to say that now-a-days it is the correct thing in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills to be a Christian. Good houses, good clothes, cleanliness and prosperity are the outward and visible signs of the members of the church. The old Khasi religion is becoming a genuine paganism, a religion of the villages. The more advanced and better educated section of the community have outgrown it, and Christianity is the only religion ready to their hand to take its place. The schools of the district are in the hands of the missionaries,

and the children thus come early under the influence of Christian thought and principles.

In addition to the Welsh Calvinists, there is a Roman Catholic Mission which in 1905 had, according to their own returns, about 900 converts. There is also a small community of members of the Church of England, numbering altogether about 400 souls, who have two small churches at Sokha and Jowai. The Welsh Mission employ altogether twenty-one missionaries in the hills, eleven of whom are ladies. They are stationed at the following places :—Cherrapunji, Jowai, Laitlyngkot, Mairang, Maoflang, Shangpung, Shella, Wajijer, and Shillong. The Roman Catholics have six missionaries and ten sisters in the district. The missionaries are stationed at Shillong, Cherrapunji, and Laitkynsew, and at Raliang and Lamin in the Jowai subdivision. Work was first begun by the Roman Catholics in 1890.

Other religions.

More than three-fifths of the Hindu, and more than half of the Muhammadan population of the district were enumerated in the town of Shillong. Neither of these creeds possess any attractions for a Khasi. Other religions which had a few followers were—Sikhs (9), Jains (3), Buddhists (55), and Brahmos (83).

Occupations.

In 1901, 76 per cent of the population returned agriculture as their means of occupation, a proportion that was lower than that returned for any British district in the Province. This was partly due to the fact that in a sparsely populated district like the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the inhabitants even of a little town like Shillong

form an appreciable section of the total population. Over 11 per cent of the people, considerably more than half of whom were women, described themselves as supported by general labour. Some of these persons were, no doubt, employed in the coal mines and lime quarries of the district, and others in carrying loads to the different markets situated in the hills, for the Khasi is an indefatigable trader, but most of them were to some extent supported by cultivation. The occupations of the people in 1901 were distributed under 520 heads, details for which will be found in the report on the census taken in that year. Such a classification is, however, too elaborate for a district like the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, and an examination of these figures would serve no useful purpose. The number of persons returned under each of the eight main orders was as follows :— Government, 2,490 ; pasture and agriculture, 155,641 ; personal service, 2,553 ; preparation and supply of material substances, 12,108 ; commerce, transport and storage, 3,420 ; professions, 2,295 ; unskilled labour, not agricultural, 23,131 ; means of subsistence independent of occupation, 612.

CHAPTER IV.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTS.

Crops raised—Rice—Millets—Maize and Job's tears—Potatoes—Oranges—Pan and black-pepper—Areca nut—Bay leaf—Cinnamon—Experimental farms—Agricultural implements—Livestock—Bee-keeping—Forests.

Crops raised. The staple crops raised by the Khasis are wet and dry rice, various kinds of millets, maize, potatoes, a small tuber called *sokphlang*, cotton, pineapples, oranges, betel-nut, pan, and bay leaves, and in the gardens round their houses vegetables, pulse, and occasionally sugarcane. There are no statistics to show the area under each crop.

Rice : wet rice.

Wet rice is grown in the valleys with which the hills are intersected, both in the Bhoi country and the northern portion of the high plateau. The inhabitants of the hills near Cherrapunji depend for their rice supply upon the plains of Sylhet. About the middle of February, or even earlier, the villagers turn the water on to their fields. This water is allowed to remain for three or four weeks till the soil is thoroughly saturated, and is then drained off. The land is hoed up twice, and the water turned again on to the fields for another ten or fifteen days. The ground is then hoed up two or three times, and harrowed till it has been reduced to a fine puddle, and the seed is sown in May or June. The system followed varies, however, in different portions of the district. On the

higher plateau the villagers often hoe the ground only once and puddle the soil by driving cattle over it. When the plant is about six inches high, water is again introduced, and allowed to stand for about two months, when it is let off for a few days to allow the field to be weeded. After weeding it is again let in, and is not drained off till the crop is ripe for the sickle in October or November. Rice is hardly ever transplanted, except to a small extent in the Bhoi country, and the plough is only used in the Bhoi country and the Jaintia Hills. The fields on which wet rice is grown are usually well manured with cowdung.

Upland rice is grown on the hillsides. About the middle of September, the soil is lightly hoed up and the grass with the earth attaching to the roots allowed to dry. In February, these sods are collected into little heaps and burnt, and a few weeks afterwards, when the spring rains fall, the ashes are scattered over the ground. The field is then hoed up, and the rice sown in April or May. In the neighbourhood of Shillong dry rice is generally sown on land from which a crop of potatoes has been already taken, and where this is the case only a light hoeing is required. Harvesting goes on on the high plateau in October and November, but in the lower hills it sometimes lasts till the end of December. High land rice is seldom grown twice running on the same spot, and after one crop a fallow period of four or five years is usually allowed.

After the paddy has been reaped it is piled up in stacks in the field and left for two or three weeks, as that

Dry rice.

**Threshing,
etc.**

renders it easier to thresh. Cattle are not used for this purpose as in the plains, and the villagers either tread out the grain with their feet, or beat it out with a stick, or take it up in handfuls and beat it against a stone. The grain is then winnowed by being allowed to fall from some height on to the ground, and is stored in great drums made of bamboo mats. When required for food it is husked in a large wooden pestle and mortar. The straw is sometimes used as fodder, or is burnt and used as manure, but is more generally thrown away.

Millets.

Millets are of three kinds—*raitruh* (*eleusine coracana*), *raishan* (*paspalum sanguinale*) and *raisoh*. The first and the last are grown on land covered with bamboos or trees which have been felled and burnt as they lie. The soil, which has been manured by the ashes of the jungle, is not even hoed up, and the seeds are dibbled in amongst the ashes. The crop is sown in April and May, and reaped about six months later. On the Shillong plateau *raitruh* is generally sown amongst the potato plants, whereas in the War country it is raised in separate fields. *Raishan* is grown on the hillsides of the high plateau after the ground has been well hoed up and pulvarized. It is sown about a month later than the other two varieties, and reaped at the same time. Millet is threshed in the same way as rice.

**Maize and
Job's tears.**

Maize is either grown in garden ground or is sown in the potato fields at the time when the tubers are earthed up. It is usually sown in April and May and ripens

in August or September. The maize fields are well hoed, and are treated with manure. Job's tears (*coix lachryma*) are usually sown on high grass land, in conjunction with potatoes, *raitruh* or *sohphlang*. After a single crop the land is allowed to lie fallow for four or five years. The seed is sown between May and June and reaped in November and December.

Potatoes are extensively grown on the higher slopes, and **Potatoes.** in lower land which has been well drained. They were first introduced in 1830 by Mr. David Scott, and were much appreciated by the Khasis. In 1881-82, the recorded export of potatoes from the Province amounted to 127,000 maunds. Five years later the tuber was attacked by a disease due to the presence of a fungus (*phytophthora infestans*), and in the following season the crop is said to have rotted in the ground. In 1887-88, the total export of potatoes fell to 42,000 maunds, or little more than one-third of the exports of the previous year. This was a great decrease, but it was followed by a still further depression in the potato trade, and for the next thirteen years the annual exports never amounted to as much as 30,000 maunds. Bottom was reached in 1899-00, when the total reported exports only amounted to 5,000 maunds. The tide then turned, and in 1903-04 the exports nearly reached 51,000 maunds. This great improvement was due to the introduction of the Naini Tal potato in 1897. This tuber yields a fine return, and is not nearly so susceptible to disease as the indigenous variety. In considering the figures of export it must be borne in mind that these figures are

for the Province as a whole, and that owing to the system under which they are collected they cannot lay much claim to accuracy.* It is, however, doubtful whether any appreciable quantity of potatoes is exported from any portion of the Province except the Khasi Hills. Two crops are raised in the district. The first is sown in February and March, and is gathered in June and July, the second is sown in July and August, and is harvested in November and December. The turf is pared, and the sods are laid in long ridges and burnt. Holes are then dug about nine inches deep, and the same distance from one another. These holes are partially filled in with loose earth, and a potato, which is often divided into two halves, is placed in each. They are then filled up with dry manure and soil. When the plant is about six inches high, the ground about the roots is loosened and the plant earthed up. Potatoes are also grown on land which is cropped from year to year. Each hole receives a handful of cowdung, and the yield is greater than when grown on the hill-side. The *sohphlang* (*flemingia vestita*) is either grown between the Job's tears, or on land which has already yielded a crop of potatoes. It is sown in March and April and gathered in the winter months, and is always eaten raw.

Oranges.

Oranges are grown along the southern base of the hills from Nongjri in the east to Law on the border of

* Most of the potatoes are carried by country boat, and the traffic registrar at Bhairab bazar has no means of compelling the boatmen to answer his enquiries or of testing the accuracy of their replies. No effective check can be exercised upon his tables.

the Garo Hills. The plantations extend from the foot of the hills to a height of about 1,500 feet, and are carried up the ravines which score the southern face of the high plateau. A few trees are grown in the neighbourhood of Shillong, 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, but at this elevation they do not do well. The soil of the War country, as the southern face of the hills is called, is very fertile, though outwardly it seems to be composed of rocks and pebbles. Oranges do best on limestone soil, and the trees at Tyrna enjoy a great reputation, but many of the plantations have been put out on soil in which there is very little lime. The trees are generally raised from seed which is selected with great care. The pips are placed in water, and only the ones that sink are used. They are sown on a layer of earth about nine inches thick, which is shaded from the sun and sprinkled with water at night. The plants are left here for four months or so till May or June, and are then transferred to a nursery where they stay till they are two or three years old. Trees are also occasionally propagated from cuttings, a somewhat speedier method than that of raising them from pips.

The first step to be taken when preparing a plantation is to cut and burn the jungle and weed out the roots of *ikra*. The ground is then put out with plantains, and when they have attained a reasonable size, orange trees, jack-fruit trees, areca palms, and bay trees are planted in their shade. This transfer from the nursery to the plantation takes place in May or June, and at the end of the rains, the young orange trees are pruned. After

three years the plantains are dug out, as by this time the other trees are firmly established, and periodical weeding is all that is required for the upkeep of the plantation. Orange trees begin to bear when they are six or seven years old. They suffer much from the depredations of a borer, and heavy rain in April is injurious.

The export trade is in the hands of Bengalis, most of them natives of Sylhet, who visit the gardens and the local markets such as Therria, Bholaganj, Maodon, Lyngkhat, Shella, Ballat, Ranikar, Maobang, and Tallab. Chhatak is the centre from which oranges are consigned to Calcutta. In 1903-04, it was said that more than sixty million oranges were exported from the Province. Little reliance can, however, be placed upon these figures. Thirty to thirty-two oranges make one *bhar*, and 100 *bhars* one *shispah*. A *shispah* sells in ordinary years for from Rs. 10 to Rs. 20, but when the crop has been a poor one the price sometimes runs as high as Rs. 45.

**Pan and
black-pep-
per.**

Pan and black-pepper are very much alike. The first is a very important crop and is grown extensively along the southern border of the district. The cultivation of black-pepper is very limited. Both are creepers, and require trees for their support. Poma (*cedrela toona*), jack, betel-nut, and two or three other kinds of trees are generally thought to be most suitable. Both *pan* and pepper are propagated from cuttings, which require a moist and shady situation, and in dry localities recourse

is had to artificial irrigation, the water being carried to the gardens in bamboo pipes. Decayed wood, which also serves as a manure, is placed over the roots of the vines to keep them moist and cool.

Pan begins to yield leaf two or three years after it has been planted. The leaves are gathered at intervals of three or four months from fully matured plants, and are counted as follow :—one bundle or *tap* contains 160 leaves and 20 *taps* make one *kuri*. The normal price of a *kuri* of *pan* is from Re. 1 to Rs. 3, prices being lowest in the rains and highest in March and April. Black-pepper begins to bear four years after it has been planted. The berries ripen in December and January and, after plucking, are cured by drying in the sun.

Betel-nut is a profitable crop and ranks in importance **Areca nut.** with oranges and *pan*. It is grown all along the southern face of the district up to an elevation of 1,500 feet. The betel-nut tree is raised from seed. The seed-nuts are taken from selected trees, and are sown in a nursery and the seedlings, when two or three years old, are transferred to their permanent quarters. The palms are planted out with oranges and other trees, and the plantations require no cultivation beyond a weeding twice a year. The trees begin to yield when eight to ten years old. A good tree will bear four bunches containing about 600 nuts, but two bunches per tree is the more usual rate. The nuts ripen at the beginning of the year and are collected between February and May. Green nuts

also are plucked for sale. Ripe nuts are cured, when so desired, by steeping them in a tank for several months.

Betel-nuts are counted as follows :—10 nuts make 1 *gai* or *kynti* ; 40 *gais* make one *bih* or *kani* ; 16 *bihs* make one *lynti*. A *kani* of nuts (400) sells from As 10 to Re. 1.

Bay leaf:
tespat.

Bay trees are generally allowed to seed themselves, and the young shoot, when required, is dug up and transferred to the plantation in May or June. The trees begin to yield when from eight to ten years old. The twigs are lopped off with a *dao*, and the leaves, when dry, are packed in long bamboo baskets each of which holds about 25 seers. The usual price obtained by the growers for bay leaf is Rs. 4 to Rs. 5 per maund.

Cinnamon.

The Khasi cinnamon is not a cultivated product but the tree grows wild in the warmer parts of the district. When it is proposed to convert it into spice, the tree is cut down, the twigs are cut into sticks about two feet long, the outer skin or cuticle is scraped off with a knife, and finally the bark is stripped off and dried.

Experimental farms.

In 1873, an experimental farm was opened on the high plateau of Shillong at an elevation of about 5,900 feet above the level of the sea. Experiments were made with new varieties of potato and different kinds of fruit trees, but the farm was not successful. It had been started on somewhat ambitious lines with a European Superintendent, and in the two years 1874—76 it showed a deficit of Rs. 23,000. Financial considerations at that time

rendered it impossible to devote so large a sum to agricultural experiments, the Superintendent was discharged and the farm, after being carried on for a few years on a much more modest scale, was finally abandoned altogether. Cattle, sheep, and pigs had been imported at considerable cost from England, but in 1875-76 disease broke out in a virulent form and nearly all the animals died.

In 1897-98, an experimental farm was opened once more in almost the same locality. Experiments made with wheat, barley, and oats were not successful, but a considerable stimulus was given to agriculture by the introduction of new varieties of potato. The old Khasi potato had seriously deteriorated, and the Naini Tal variety, which was imported to the farm, has practically become the potato of commerce in the hills. The plant is liable to blight, and new varieties have to be imported to the district at intervals of a few years. The system of storing fodder in silos for use in the dry months of winter was introduced and is being adopted by the Khasis. A model dairy was started in 1900 in connection with the farm and proved extremely profitable. The Khasi cows are poor milkers, but such milk as they give is unusually rich, and the butter made was of exceptionally good quality. Two private dairies were subsequently opened, and the Government dairy was abandoned. With the object of improving the indigenous breed of cattle a herd of cross bred English cows and a bull were imported from Patna in 1902, and two Bhutia cows in 1903. The latter are a cross between a

mithan bull (*bos frontalis*) and a Thibetan cow. English and Australian pigs were also purchased in December 1902, and have been breeding well.

An experimental fruit garden was opened in 1902, at an elevation of about 5,300 feet above the level of the sea. Fruit trees of all kinds have been planted, but the fact that the rains break so early in the year is a serious obstacle to their due development. A tropical plantation was opened in 1904 at Wahjain on the southern face of the Khasi Hills, at an elevation of about 1,000 feet above the level of the sea. A large number of spices and tropical fruits have been planted out. Coffee and arrowroot have already been grown successfully by Khasis in this locality. Experiments have also been made with tea on the high plateau, and attempts have been made to introduce the cultivation of silk. Seed of the univoltine worm was procured from France, and the cocoons were sent to that country for valuation. They were priced at about Rs. 240 per maund of dry cocoons, which is equivalent to Rs. 80 per maund of green cocoons, or four times the price ordinarily obtained in the silk-rearing districts of Bengal. It is hoped that the industry may be adopted by the Khasis and steps are being taken to plant mulberry trees in the hills.

**Agricultural
implements.**

The ordinary agricultural implements of the Khasi are a hoe with a short handle and a triangular head, affixed not at a right but at an acute angle to the shaft, a sickle (*rashi*), three or four kinds of daos or bill-hooks, a

harrow (*ka moi*), a crowbar, which is used for the construction of irrigation channels, sieves, and winnowing baskets. The plough used by the Syntengs resembles the one in use in the plains of the Province.

The livestock of the Khasis consist of cattle, goats, **Livestock.** pigs, and poultry. The cattle are a sturdy little breed, and are only kept for food and for their manure, the indigenous Khasi leaving all the milk to the calf. Buffaloes are kept in the neighbourhood of Shillong by Nepalese herdsman. They are not used as draught animals and the bullocks used on the Shillong-Gauhati road are all of the white Hissar breed. The small and sturdy Manipuri ox, which is not unlike the Khasi animal has proved most successful as a draught animal on the Imphal-Dimapur road, a fact which suggests that a trial might be given to the animals of the Khasi Hills. The Khasi pig is of the ordinary black variety. Sheep and poultry, including turkeys, are reared for the Shillong market.

Considerable quantities of honey are consumed and **Bee-keeping.** sold in the Khasi Hills, the ordinary price paid for honey in the comb in the Shillong bazar being 3 to 4 annas per lb. The bees from which this honey is obtained are of two kinds, the *lywai* or large wild bee, and the *ngap*, a smaller variety which is not unfrequently domesticated. The *lywai* invariably make their nest in the clefts of high and inaccessible rocks, and are smoked out and generally suffocated before any attempt is made to take

the comb. The *ngap* live in hollow trees and in holes under stones. The Khasis take advantage of this habit to prepare suitable nests for the swarms when they come up from the valleys in the summer, and when they have settled in these places catch and hive them. This is done by simply searching for the queen bee and carrying her off, and if the swarm offers any resistance they are smoked enough to stupefy but not to kill them. The nests are generally traced by the deposits left by the bees. When once these have been found the Khasis go to the spot early in the morning while the air is still quite clear, and note the direction from which the insects come. The native form of hive is a hollow piece of wood about two and a half feet long and one foot in diameter, with a door at either end. The bees are of a migratory character and generally spend the winter in the valleys, returning to the high plateau towards the end of May.*

Forestr.

The hills were probably at one time covered with a dense growth of timber, but fires and the system of *jhum* cultivation have practically denuded the high plateau, and the remains of the forest are only to be seen in the magnificent sacred groves which now crown the summits of the higher hills. In 1874, when the Viceroy visited Shillong he directed that steps should be taken to reserve certain tracts for the growth of timber, and in 1877 the following areas in the Khasi Hills were set

* *Vide* enclosures to letter from Secretary to Chief Commissioner No. 4431, dated 16th August 1882, to the Government of India in the Revenue and Agriculture Department.

aside for the purpose; twenty blocks were also reserved in the Jaintia Hills.

State in which situated.	Name of forest.	Approximate area in square miles.	State in which situated.	Name of forest	Approximate area in square miles.
Cherra ...	Maophan Siem	1½	Myllem ...	Umtru ...	2½
Do. ...	Thynriew Siar	½	Do. ...	Um Ran ...	1½
Do. ...	Ka Lyng-Kyper	½	Nongkhiao	Ter Sung ...	1
Khyrim ...	Ryngab Forest	½	Do. ...	Ka Lao-syn-iong near Maonai-punji.	1½
Langrin ...	Kulai-L y n g - Sgun.	6½	Do. ...	Mairang forest	½
Maharam ...	Lao Blei ...	½	Do. ...	Nongbri ...	2½
Do. ...	Sakuang ...	1½	Nongspung...	Nongspung ...	½
Do. ...	Nong Kydait alias Ryng-byneng.	8½	Do. ...	Lyngkhai forest	½
Do. ...	Rang Mao ...	1	Nongstoin ...	Nongstoin forest.	4½
Marriw ...	Ka Miang Sam near Nongka Sen.	½	Rambrai ...	Maodo forest...	7
Do. ...	Lang Krai ...	½	Maofiang ...	Um-Ka-Wang...	½
Do. ...	Tersung ...	1	Maofiang and Nonglewai.	Ka Khiao Ryngi Sohlong.	1
Maofiang ...	Mar Shillong ...	1½	Nonglewai ...	Ka Khiao Mao Kaleng.	½
Do. ...	Ka Lao Sain ...	1½	Sohiong ...	Lao Nongkseh	2½
Maosanram ...	Maosanram ...	1½	Do. ...	Lao Sohiong ...	½
Myllem ...	Maoreng ...	3½	Laitlyngkot...	Laitlyngkot ...	2½
Do. ...	Maopat ...	1	Lait-Kroh ...	Lait-Kroh ...	½
Do. ...	Forest bordering on the new cart road.	1½	Maosmai ...	Kyrna Ka Dier	½
			Nonglang ...	Nongkynah ...	½

Subsequently the Jirang and Narpuh forests were added to this list. In these reserved tracts trees can

only be cut under a pass from the Deputy Commissioner, but the villagers are themselves expected to keep the fire lines clean. In 1878, a block of land, fifty square miles in area, near Saipung in the south-east corner of the Jaintia Hills, was constituted a reserve. This forest is said to contain a quantity of nahor (*mesua ferrea*), and sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), but up to date it has not been worked. Certain forest blocks which cover altogether a few square miles of land have also been reserved in the neighbourhood of Shillong. They contain little but pine, and have been taken up with the object of protecting the station water-supply, or of forming a fuel reserve, or for some other purpose. These blocks are (1) Upper Shillong; (2) Riat Laban and Kench's trace; (3) Laitkor, Laitumkhrah, and Block No. II; (4) a tree nursery reserve; and (5) the Barpani forest. A staff consisting of one deputy ranger, one head guard, and eight guards is maintained in the district, and royalty is levied on all forest produce imported into the plains. If this produce has come from Khasi territory royalty is levied at half the usual rates and the Seim is allowed to collect the other half.

The forests on the northern ranges and on the southern faces of the hills have already been described in the paragraphs on the flora of the district. The most valuable timber trees are, on the north, sal (*shorea robusta*), and nahor; and on the south nahor, poma (*cedrela toona*), champa (*michelia champaca*), and gundroi (*cinnamomum glanduliferum*)

CHAPTER V.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Arts and industries—Lac—Food and dress—Rents and wages—
Prices—Economic condition of the people—Communications—
Navigable rivers—Post and telegraph—Trade—Shillong—Cher-
rapunji—Jowai.

The arts and industries of the Khasis are described **Arts and industries.** in the monograph on the tribe. They include the manufacture of earthenware pottery, iron implements, baskets and mats, jewellery, and cotton cloths. The Khasis make pots, like the Hiras, by laying on the clay in strips without using the wheel. Reference has already been made to the iron industry in Chapter I. Baskets and mats are made of bamboo and cane, and durable nets from the fibre of the pineapple. The jewellery is decidedly artistic, and includes coronets, belts, and silver tassels which are hung from silver ropes. A description of this jewellery with illustrations of the different articles manufactured will be found in a monograph on the Gold and Silver Wares of Assam published at Shillong in 1905. An account of the system of weaving will be found in a monograph on the Cotton Fabrics of Assam, published by the Superintendent of Government Printing at Calcutta in 1897. The fishing industry, as is only natural in a mountainous country, is not of very great importance. Fish

are occasionally netted but more often poisoned with plants called *khariw*, *sohramthein*, *jaiur*, and *sohlew*, or occasionally with lime.

Lac.

Lac is generally reared on arhar (*cajanus indicus*), and on two shrubs which are called by the Bhois *snam nongdak* and *thesit*. The method of propagation is as follows:—Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets, and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next crop is to be grown. After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches, and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months, and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. The lac produced is exported in the crude form of stick lac. Most of it is reared by Bhois and Mikirs in the Bhoi circle on the Nowgong and Kamrup borders.

Food and dress

The staple food of the people is rice and curry. They also consume considerable quantities of dried fish and are fond of most kinds of meat, and more especially of pork. Some of the Syntengs abstain from beef, but the Khasis have no scruples on the subject. Milk, like the rest of the hill tribes, they will not touch, and unlike their neighbours on the east and west they do not eat dogs. The unconverted hillmen are heavy drinkers, and distil a strong spirit from rice. Native Christians and Pagans alike consume large quantities

of tamul pan, a proceeding which has a most disfiguring effect upon their mouths. The ordinary village man wears a small kilt, a sleeveless coat, and a cloth cap with peaks in front and at the rear. Khasi women wear a narrow cloth as underclothing, a striped cloth tied round the waist, and another cloth with a fringed border knotted on both the shoulders. Synteng women wear a cloth smoothed round the body fastened above the bust and reaching to the ankles, with a shawl that is thrown over the shoulders and knotted in front. Both Khasi and Synteng women wear a cloth tied over the head, and chemises are now coming very generally into fashion. Civilized Khasis affect knickerbockers, which are often of white flannel, stockings, and boots, with European coats and waistcoats. Their calves and thighs are generally designed upon a very ample scale and the effect is not artistic.

The ordinary villager's house is a low dirty building. The thatched roof reaches nearly to the ground, and the walls are of planks or plastered reeds. On the southern portion of the high plateau, the walls are sometimes built of stone. There is a porch in front flush with the ground, and behind are two rooms with boarded floors. Wealthy Khasis build very comfortable cottages of a European pattern.

Land is not often sublet amongst the Khasis, but flat **Rents and Wages.** rice land in the valleys is occasionally leased out, the owner generally taking about a quarter of the gross produce. For land required for orange groves on the

southern slopes of the hills, the proportion of the produce taken by the landlord is one-third. The customary rate of wages in the villages for hired labour is six annas a day for a man and four annas for a woman.

Prices.

Prices, as is only natural, are high, as the district does not produce sufficient grain to feed the inhabitants, and the cost of transport from the plains is heavy. The ordinary price of common rice in Shillong ranges from 8 to 10 seers for a rupee. In Jowai it is generally about two seers a rupee cheaper. Of recent years there has been a general tendency for the price of rice and salt to fall. In 1880, only 5 seers of salt were procurable at Shillong for a rupee; in 1905 the same sum would purchase $8\frac{1}{2}$ seers. Salt is much dearer at Jowai than at Shillong, as that place is not connected by a cart road with the plains. The prices of rice and salt in 1880, 1890, 1900, and subsequent years will be found in Table V.

Economic condition of the people.

The people as a whole are well-to-do. They are enterprising and industrious, and are not hampered by that spirit of conservatism which in many parts of India is so fatal to all progress. On the southern slopes of the hills, the Khasis, prior to the earthquake, made large profits from lime, oranges, and areca nut. Since that date their profits have been reduced but are still considerable. The fact that the headquarters of the Administration are located at Shillong puts a large sum of money in circulation from which the people in the neighbourhood cannot fail to reap their profit. The Khasis have succeeded in keeping nearly the whole of

the trade of the district in their hands, and this in itself must be a considerable source of wealth.

A fine cart road runs through the district from Gauhati, on the Brahmaputra, to Cherrapunji. From here a bridle path connects the high plateau with the plains of Sylhet. This road enters the district at Barnihat 16 miles from Gauhati. There are dak bungalows at Barnihat, Nongpoh (30 miles from Gauhati) and at Umsning or Naia Bungalow (45 miles). Shillong itself is $63\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Gauhati. The road has been carefully aligned, and is metalled and bridged throughout. Pony tongas ply between Gauhati and Shillong, the journey being usually performed in between eight and nine hours. The introduction of a service of motor cars is under consideration. From Shillong it is $33\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Cherrapunji. There are dak bungalows at that place, and at Dumpep $17\frac{3}{4}$ miles from Shillong. Six miles south of Shillong a driving road branches off to the westward to Maoflang, 9 miles further on. There is a dak bungalow at Maoflang, and the place is connected by a bridle path with the Cherrapunji cart road, which it joins $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles north of the rest house at Serrarim, and 10 miles north of Cherrapunji. The scenery through which these roads pass is extremely picturesque. Forty-two miles from Gauhati the road emerges from the forest, and winds its way through rolling grassy hills. The Umiam is crossed 9 miles from Shillong, and the road then mounts to the Shillong plateau, through fragrant pinewoods from which a magnificent view is obtained of the gorge of the

Communica-
tions. Cart
roads.

Umiam and the slopes of the Dingiei hill. From Shillong there is a climb of about 900 feet along very easy gradients to the high plateau, and from there to Dumpep the route lies through grassy downs. From Dumpep the road runs for the most part along the edge of the deep ravine of a tributary of the Therria river. The bridle path from Maoflang to Serrarim traverses the beautiful gorge of the Bogapani, and crosses that river by a suspension bridge.

Bridle paths. From Maoflang a bridle path runs north and westward through Sohiong (7 miles), Mairang (15 miles), and Nongkhlao (25 miles) to the border of the Kamrup district 30 miles beyond Nongkhlao. There are inspection bungalows at Mairang and Nongkhlao. This was the old road which connected Assam with the Surma Valley before the headquarters of the district were transferred to Shillong. From Sohiong a road runs westward through Nongstoin to Swangiri near the frontier of the Garo Hills, a total distance of 85 miles, and connects with a bridle path running west from Tura. There are inspection bungalows at Kynchi (13 miles), Nongkasen (24 miles), and Nongstoin (35 miles). From Shillong a bridle path, the first three miles of which are fit for wheeled traffic, runs eastward to Jowai, 34 miles away. There is an inspection bungalow at Maolyngkneng, 16 miles from Shillong. From Jowai a bridle path runs southwards to Jaintiapur in the plains of Sylhet 30½ miles away. There are inspection bungalows at Jarain, 12 miles, and Syndai, 22 miles from Jowai.

Another path runs eastward through Shangpung, Raliang, and Khonshnong, up to the bank of the Kapili river opposite to the hot springs. It is 32 miles in length, has one inspection bungalow at Shangpung, 13 miles from Jowai, and connects with a bridle path that runs westward from Haflang in the North Cachar Hills. These are, however, only the principal bridle paths maintained, and all over the country there are Khasi paths which are generally passable by a mounted man.

Across some of the streams that intersect these hill paths the Khasis have constructed living bridges. A rubber tree has been planted on either bank and the tendrils have been trained across the stream and have taken root on the further side, thus forming a bridge to which all the repairs are done by Nature herself.

In 1903-04, 94 miles of cart road and 356 miles of bridle path were maintained in the district.

The rivers of the district are not very largely used for the purposes of navigation, but canoes penetrate for a short distance into the hills from the district of Sylhet. The Hari is navigable for canoes carrying from 25 to 30 maunds as far as Borghat. The Lubha is navigable for canoes as far as Lahalein, but is dangerous when the river is swollen in the rains. Canoes can go up the Therria river, as far as Therria ghat in the winter time, and up to Sohryngkew when the river rises. They can also go up the Lakhat to Lakhat bazar. Somewhat larger boats can go up the Shella river to Shella bazar, and up the Jadukata to Rilang bazar.

**Post and
telegraph.**

In 1904, there were post offices in the district at Shillong, Cherrapunji, Nongpoh, Jowai, Laitkynsew, Maoflang, and Ishamati. The offices at Cherrapunji, Nongpoh, and Ishamati are combined post and telegraph offices and there is a departmental telegraph office at Shillong. Nearly 33,000 letters and post-cards were delivered from the post offices in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in 1903-04. More than 1,000 savings banks' accounts were open and the total volume of deposits amounted to Rs. 1,60,000.

Trade.

The Khasis are keen traders and a considerable proportion of the population earn their living by travelling round to the markets held at different places in the district. A list of these markets will be found in the appendix. The chief centres of business are Shillong, Jowai, Cherrapunji, and Laitlyngkot. The principal exports from the district are lime, potatoes, oranges, betel-nut, pan, and bay leaves, which leave the district on the south, and cotton and lac which are raised in the northern hills. The imports are rice and other food grains, dried fish, salt, tobacco, general oilman's stores, cotton piece-goods, kerosine oil, corrugated iron, and hand woven cotton and silk cloths from the plains.

**Development
of the shop.**

The development of the shop can be traced in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills from its very earliest beginnings. Along certain roads there is always a large traffic on market days, and an enterprising woman takes her seat with a basket full of goods at the roadside. When the rains break she erects an umbrella to protect her from the inclemencies of rain and sun, and if her undertaking

proves remunerative she builds a little shelter. These tiny hovels are scarcely bigger than a dog kennel, and are only large enough to contain a human being squatting on the ground and a basket or two of goods. Yet none the less they form one end of the scale of trade whose higher notes are represented by Liberty or Harrod's stores. The Khasis even have their restaurants, and along the more frequented paths there are little sheds where tea and rolls can be purchased by the thirsty traveller. At Mahadeo, too, between Cherrapunji and Therria ghat, it is the regular custom for coolies coming up the hill to halt for a substantial meal of fish and rice.

There are only three places in the district that have any title to the name of town, Shillong, Cherrapunji, and Jowai. **Towns.**
Shillong. Shillong is situated in $25^{\circ} 34' N.$, and $91^{\circ} 53' E.$, 4,908 feet above the level of the sea. The station lies at the foot of the Shillong Peak, an elevated tract of land about four miles in length and rather more than 6,000 feet in height. It is situated on a fine plateau from two and a half to four miles in breadth, which is bounded on the north by the gorge of the Umiam. The level of the plateau here falls sharply to the river bed about 1,500 feet below, and on the north-west the view is bounded by the great mass of the Dingiei hill, whose summit is 6,077 feet above the level of the sea. To the north-east there is a magnificent view on a clear day across rolling hills to the Assam Valley. Forty-five miles away the broad stretches of the Brahmaputra gleam in the middle distance, half way between Shillong and the blue wall of hills which shuts in the valley on the north. Beyond

the outer ranges there is a chain of snowy peaks where over a hundred miles away the giants of the Himalaya tower into the air. The Shillong plateau is broken up with hills, and streams, and valleys. It is watered by the Umshirpi and Umkrah, both of which are precipitated in magnificent cascades, known as the Bishop and the Beadon falls, into a deep gorge and then unite in one stream to join the Umiam. These falls are situated a little to the west of the Gauhati road, about two miles from the cutcherry. The path to them leads through tame and uninteresting fields, which suddenly terminate in a precipitous ravine several hundred feet in depth. The station has been very tastefully laid out amongst the pinewoods, and since 1897 all the buildings have been constructed of timber, reeds, and plaster, and so are practically earthquake-proof. Shillong possesses various attractions which are not to be found in most of the hill stations of the Himalayas. There is a full sized polo ground and a fine race course. There is a charming cricket ground, excellent golf links, beautiful roads along which to drive, and fine breezy downs for a morning gallop. A hotel has recently been opened, and as soon as the place has been rendered more accessible to the outside world it will probably become one of the most popular summer resorts in India.

Shillong became the *sadr* station of the district in 1864, and ten years later the headquarters of the newly appointed Chief Commissioner. But, strictly speaking, the name is a misnomer, as the town is

situated on the plateau of Yeodo,* and Shillong is the name of the peak and of the high plateau to the west of the present station. This plateau is only about five miles from the cutcherry, not as the crow flies, but by a beautifully graded road, which, after crossing the Umshirpi, winds its way through bracken and pine-woods to the higher levels. The Committee who were appointed in 1862 to report on the desirability of Shillong as the headquarters of the district, proposed to locate the station and the sanatorium on the high plateau of Shillong, and to reserve Yeodo for a dépôt for invalid European troops and for the lines of a native regiment. Shillong is about 900 feet higher than Yeodo, and though the average rainfall is a little higher,† there is a very perceptible difference in the temperature. Most people will probably regret that effect was not given to the original proposal, and that the station was not built on the higher of the two plateaus. From a perusal of the correspondence it would appear that the difference between the two places was not clearly borne in mind. The Committee distinctly recommended that the civil station and the sanatorium should be located on the plateau of Shillong and the slopes descending thence towards Yeodo, but the Lieutenant-Governor, in his letter acknowledging the receipt of their report, expressed his approval of the removal of the *sadr* station of the district from Cherra to Yeodo. A beginning was no doubt

* Properly Yewduh, from Yew, a bazar, and duh, abbreviation of khadduh, last, i.e., the last bazaar of the series.

† In the six years 1899—1904 the average rainfall of Upper Shillong was only 13 inches more than that of Shillong station, i.e., 95 inches instead of 82.

made on the lower plateau, and when once houses and offices had been erected there, people were, doubtless, loathe to start building five miles away.

The dense pinewoods which are now such a feature in the scenery of the station do not seem to have been in existence in the early sixties. The steep sides of Shillong hill are said to have been partially clad with jungle and brushwood, but the slopes and plateau of Yeodo were mostly devoid of trees. Before the advent of the British the valley of Yeodo seems to have been very sparsely peopled. Some of the Khasis, in fact, considered it to be part of the Bhoi or low country and it was said, though apparently quite erroneously, to be a feverish place. The bazar at Yeodo, the present *burra hat*, was largely attended as it was connected with the religion of the Khasis. The place was said to be a sacred one and solemn sacrifices were offered there and dances held. On these occasions the people attending the bazar had the privilege of paying double the ordinary toll.

Shillong was constituted a station under Act V (B. C.) of 1876 in 1878. Its affairs are managed by a committee of 12 members, presided over by the Deputy Commissioner. Five of the members hold their seats by virtue of their office, and the remaining seven are nominated by the Chief Commissioner. The principal sources of revenue are a tax on houses at $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of their annual rental, a water and latrine rate, and a grant from Government. The total income of the station in

1903-04 was over Rs. 25,000. The rates are heavier than in other towns of the Province, and the incidence per head of direct taxation, excluding the house tax assessed on Government buildings, was Rs. 2-11-2 in 1903-04. Details with regard to the income and expenditure of the station in 1890-01 and 1900-01 will be found in Table X.

The total area of the town, including the cantonment, is nearly $4\frac{3}{4}$ square miles, and it is served by $16\frac{1}{2}$ miles of metalled and nearly 6 miles of unmetalled roads. An excellent supply of drinking water is obtained from springs rising in the Shillong range, and is distributed in pipes all over the town. The cantonment covers an area of 445 acres, and had an average annual income during the eight years ending with 1902-03 of about Rs. 6,250.

Cherrapunji is situated in $25^{\circ} 15' N.$, and $91^{\circ} 44' E.$ **Cherrapunji.** on a small plateau, from three to four hundred acres in extent, and 4,455 feet above the level of the sea. On the west it is shut in by a low range of hills, while, on the three remaining sides, the cliffs drop steeply to the river gorges by which the station is surrounded. The view from the eastern edge of the plateau is particularly striking. The ravine terminates in a semicircle of precipices, whose slopes, for a considerable height above the river, are covered with brilliant herbage or dense tree forest. Some five hundred feet below the summit, this natural glaciis ends, and an absolutely sheer wall of rock, as smooth and perpendicular as though chiselled by the hand

of the most careful mason, shuts in the valley on this side. Lower down the ravine is joined by other gorges, all of which have been carved out of the limestone rock by the rivers hurrying towards the plains, and the view is bounded by ridge upon ridge, whose precipitous slopes are clothed with luxuriant vegetation. The roar of the torrent rises from its bed several thousand feet below, like the distant thunder of surf upon the coast, and, perhaps, is most effective when the valleys are filled with mist, and there is nothing but the distant voice of the waters to tell of the depths beneath. To the south the eye travels for mile upon mile over the levels of Sylhet. The cliff rises sheer, 4,000 feet and more, from the plain, and there are no outlying ranges of lower hills to soften the transition from the mountain to the valley. On a clear day in July the spectacle is sufficiently bizarre. The whole surface of the plain seems one broad lake, dotted over with clumps of trees, and it is almost impossible to realize that this inland sea is in reality a densely peopled district. Cherrapunji itself is a grassy, marshy, plateau, with streams and pools on every side, and huge masses of lime stock rock covered with ferns and moss. The ruins of the old bungalows, which were built of solid masonry, still remain, to recall the time when in spite of its rainfall it was a small but gay European station, and the site of the jail, the cutcherry, the mess, and various other houses can still be seen. At the upper end of the plateau there is a large church and school belonging to the Welsh Presbyterian mission, while the Khasi village nestles on the crest of the first range of hills. The place is rich

alike in monuments and memories. There is a fine stone pillar erected in memory of David Scott, and a massive tomb which covers the remains of Mr. Harry Inglis who most successfully exploited the immense stores of limestone in the neighbourhood. The cemetery, which is set on a hill, affords abundant evidence that many of the poor invalids who were sent to this hill sanatorium, arrived too late to shake off the fevers of the plains. The Khasi tombs are, if anything, more noticeable than those of the Europeans.

Jowai is a prosperous village which stands on a fine ^{Jowai} triangular plateau 4,422 feet above sea level, and on three sides drops sharply to the Myntdu, or Hari river. It is situated in $25^{\circ} 26' N.$ and $92^{\circ} 12' E.$ and in 1901 had a population of 3,511 souls. It is the residence of the Subdivisional Officer and the centre of a considerable trade. The excellent houses in which nearly all the people dwell is ample evidence of the prosperity of the inhabitants.

CHAPTER VI.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

General administration—Land revenue—The Jaintia Hills—Country spirit—Opium—Ganja—Income tax—Public Works—Criminal justice—Registration—Civil police—Jail—Education—Medical.

**General
administra-
tion.**

For general administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions, the Khasi Hills or Shillong and the Jaintia Hills or Jowai. Shillong is under the immediate charge of the Deputy Commissioner, who is allowed one subordinate magistrate as his assistant. The greater part of the subdivision is, in theory, independent territory, and, as will be subsequently explained, some of the criminal and civil work is disposed of by the seims. The Deputy Commissioner is in political relations with these petty chiefs, but as the whole system of administration is of a very simple character, it is very seldom necessary for him to interfere.

**Land
Revenue.**

The Jaintia Hills and the following villages in the Khasi Hills are British territory :—Bairong, Jirngam, Laitkroh, Laitlyngkot, Lankadieng, Maobehlarlhar, Maomluh, Maopunkyrting, Maosmai, Maothang Sohkhylum, Marbisu, Mordon, Mynteng, Nongbah, Nongiri, Nongkroh, Nonglait, Nonglang, Nonglongkien, Nongpoh, Nongriangsi, Nongriat, Nongshluit, Nongthymmai, Ramdait, Saitsohpen, Sinai, Sinai Maoshanrut, Sohbar, Tymar, Tynriang, Tynrong, Tyrna, and Umniuh.

In the British villages in the Khasi Hills cultivators pay a tax of Rs. 2 per house. This is collected by sirdars who receive a commission of 10, and in a few cases of 20, per cent. The total receipts under this head are shown in Table VIII, and amount to nearly Rs. 6,000 per annum. Special rules are in force for the leasing of land in Shillong station.* Building sites are sold at an upset price of Rs. 100 per acre to the highest bidder, or are leased for a term of 99 years. Land not fit for building purposes can be sold at an upset price of Rs. 20 per acre. The purchaser of a building site is bound to expend a certain sum on the construction of a house, but this amount in no case exceeds Rs. 1,000 for every acre or portion of an acre and for smaller areas is less.

The Khasi system of land tenure has not as yet been sufficiently explored, and for information on this important subject reference should be made to the monograph on the tribe. According to Khasi custom land apparently belongs not to the seim or to the individual but to the clan. An individual may possess a right of occupancy, but he cannot alienate his land without the permission of a durbar of the clan.

The Jaintia Hills were resigned to the British Government by the Raja in 1835, at the time when the Jaintia Parganas were confiscated as a punishment for the murder of three British subjects. Till 1860, the only tax imposed was one he-goat, which was levied from each village, under a system dating from the times of native

**The Jaintia
Hills.**

* *Vide* page 441 of the Assam Land Revenue Manual.

rule. In 1860, a tax was levied on each house, which was stoutly resisted by the people, and, as soon as this insurrection had been quelled, the imposition of an income tax gave rise to a second revolt which was not suppressed till 1863. After the pacification of the Jaintia Hills house tax was levied at the rate of Re. 1 from the Syn-tengs, and of Rs. 2 from the Mikirs, Lalungs, and Kukis. In 1883, a full report on the land tenures of the subdivision was submitted by Mr. Heath, the Subdivisional Officer. His report and the action taken on it is summarized as follows in the Introduction to the Assam Land Revenue Manual by Sir William Ward, K.C.S.I., page clxxviii :—

“It was then ascertained that the following tenures existed, classing all lands either as low (*hali*) or high :

Hali lands were subdivided into—

(1) *Raj land*, the private property of the Raja and commonly known as *rajhali*;

(2) *Sanna and bandhari land*, being apparently land held by a kind of middlemen between the Raja and the occupants, called *Sannas* and *Bandharis*, who collected the rent and paid it to the Dalais who paid it to the Raja, the middlemen being rewarded for their trouble by rent-free grants of such land ;

(3) *Service lands*, given rent-free to Dalais, Pators, and other officers who carried on the administration ;

(4) *Village puja lands*, being land the occupants of which paid rent, which was set apart in each village for purposes of worship ;

(5) *Private lands* held by individuals, and which had been transferred from time to time by mortgage, sale, or otherwise, at the will of the owner ;

High lands were subdivided into—

(1) *Private lands*, held like *hali* private lands ;

(2) *Unclaimed land or Government waste*, which anyone might cultivate on payment of rent. This rent was supposed to go to the Raja, but the Dalais often appropriated it.

The final orders of the Chief Commissioner on this report may be summarised thus :—

(i) The house-tax on the Syntengs was raised from Re. 1 to Rs. 2 a house from 1st January 1886, the commission paid to the Dalais for collecting the enhanced tax being at the same time reduced to 10 per cent.

(ii) No land-tax was to be paid on high lands where shifting cultivation took place. The Syntengs were, however, to be given to understand that, while Government sanctioned such shifting cultivation, it would not permit any permanent occupation of high lands, or admit the growth of private rights in them, or pay compensation if such land was taken up by Government for any purpose. Where, however, foreigners or aliens cultivated such lands on payment of rent, the Dalai must pay the rent to Government, retaining only his commission.

(iii) *Rajhali* lands were to be assessed at 10 annas a *bigha*.

(iv) In the case of *private lands* it was decided not to assess a land-tax, but to maintain the principle that the form of direct taxation approved by Government in the Jaintia Hills was a house-tax, that a Synteng paying that tax is charged nothing more for cultivating private land of his own, but that anyone permanently occupying the Government land must pay rent, or revenue, in recognition of the Government right.

(v) In regard to *service lands* it was decided that the service lands of those village officials whom Government appointed or recognized, *i.e.*, Dalais and Pators, should be retained; also those occupied by Lyngdohs, *paju* officials, and Raja's servants, the latter being too insignificant to be worth touching; but that the occupants of all other *rajhali* land should pay rent."

The total area of the *Rajhali* lands is not known, and the private lands have never been surveyed or demarcated. The area of *Rajhali* lands on which revenue was assessed in 1904-05 was 12,209 *bighas*. Land newly taken up is measured up from time to time either by temporary amins or by the head clerk of the subdivisional office. The

question whether such land is *Rajhali* or private land is decided by summary enquiry on the spot. Land revenue and house tax are collected by twenty *dalais* and three *sirdars* who are elected by the people from certain specified clans, subject to the confirmation of the Deputy Commissioner. These people are remunerated by a commission of 10 per cent on their collections.

**Country
spirit.**

Country spirit is largely manufactured by the hillmen for home consumption, just as beer is brewed on farms in Europe. The still consists of a brass retort to which is fitted an earthenware still-head. Two tubes, made of wood covered with plaited straw, lead to two earthenware receivers, which are placed in two vessels of water. Spirit is distilled from rice or millet by the following method.* The rice is boiled till quite soft, and is then drained and spread in thin layers on bamboo trays. When cool it is mixed with a malting preparation and put in a square basket. This preparation saccharifies the rice. The syrup, which drips from the basket, is collected and mixed with the rice and water, and is left to ferment for five or six days. It is then distilled and yields a fairly strong spirit which is sold for from four to six annas a quart. The sale of liquor at markets and by the roadside is prohibited, and the desirability of limiting the number of stills is under consideration. The unlicensed distillation of spirit within a five mile radius of Shillong is prohibited, and the right to distil and sell liquor at three shops in that

* *Vide* Report on the manufacture and quality of country spirits in Assam by J. Weinberg, Esq., Shillong, 1904, page 15.

town is put up to auction. The prices paid for these licenses in 1900-01 and subsequent years will be found in Table IX. They generally fetch from five to six thousand rupees per annum.

There are only five opium shops in the district situated at Shillong and Nongpoh, and at Umkarto, Mynser and Langjut in the Jowai subdivision. The Khasis are not opium eaters, and the Mikirs and Lalungs in the low hills to the north are the principal consumers of the drug. Only about ten or twelve maunds are annually issued, which is not more than 3 per cent of the consumption of such districts as Sibsagar and Lakhimpur. Details of consumption and the revenue obtained will be found in Table IX. Opium.

There is one shop for the sale of ganja, which is situated at Shillong. The drug is only taken by foreigners and the total quantity issued is quite insignificant. Ganja.

The receipts from income tax in 1900-01 and successive years will be found in Table VII. For a hill district they are considerable, but this is due to the fact that Shillong is the headquarters of the Administration, and more than three-fourths of the total were realized from salaries and pensions paid by Government. The great majority of the thirty persons assessed in 1903-04 under the head "other sources of income" were traders or contractors. Income tax.

Public works are entrusted to an Executive Engineer, who is also in charge of the Kamrup district, assisted by Public Works.

three upper and three lower subordinates. In addition to the care of the public buildings the Executive Engineer is concerned with the maintenance of the line of communications from Gauhati to Companyganj in Sylhet, *viâ* Shillong, Dumpep and Maoflang, Cherrapunji, and Therria ghat. He is also in charge of the bridle paths from Shillong to Jowai, and from Cherrapunji to Shella, and of one or two other roads in the neighbourhood of Shillong.

**Criminal
Justice.**

The rulers of the petty states in the Khasi Hills are empowered to try criminal cases in which only their subjects are concerned, and which are not punishable under the Indian Penal Code with imprisonment for five years or some severer penalty. All other cases are referred to the Deputy Commissioner for disposal. Fine is the form of punishment which a Khasi seim most frequently employs. Sentences of imprisonment are occasionally awarded, but the culprit is then, as a rule, detained in the seim's house and compelled to work for him without pay. These cases are heard by the seim and his mantries in open court. The fines imposed consist of sums of money ranging from Rs. 15 to Rs. 1,100, plus in each case a pig. The fines are appropriated by the seim and his assessors, so that they have every inducement to convict and to impose heavy sentences. The Khasis are, however, a very democratic people, and any open injustice of this kind would be very speedily resented. The accused person is represented by a friend who pleads his case. Rupees 1,100 was the fine imposed for murder before the advent of the British.

If the prisoner was unable to pay so large a sum he was put to death. In the Jaintia Hills, the Subdivisional Officer is the principal judicial authority subject, of course, to the usual right of appeal to the Deputy Commissioner, and to the maximum punishment that he is empowered to impose. Petty cases are, however, often settled in the village. The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred, except in their criminal capacity over European British subjects, and the Deputy Commissioner exercises the power of life and death. Capital sentences and sentences for a term of seven years' imprisonment and upwards require, however, the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner. Appeals lie to the Deputy Commissioner from the orders of his assistants, if preferred within thirty days. No appeal lies from sentences imposed by the Deputy Commissioner of less than three years' imprisonment. The criminal work of the district is light. In 1904, 183 cases were tried by the Deputy Commissioner and his assistants, in the course of which 293 witnesses were examined.

Civil suits are decided by the seims or other local authorities provided that both parties to the case are subject to their jurisdiction, and that neither party is related to the members of the court. Other cases are heard by the Deputy Commissioner or his assistants. In 1904, 144 civil cases were tried.

The Registration Act is only in force in the civil station and cantonment of Shillong. The total number of documents registered in 1904 was only 59.

Registration.
tion.

- Garrison.** A native infantry regiment is stationed at Shillong, and there is a small volunteer corps which in 1904 had a strength of 34.
- Civil police.** The sanctioned civil police force of the district in 1903 consisted of 23 officers and 183 men, 130 of whom were armed with breech-loading smooth bore carbines. The actual police duties are light, and a considerable proportion of these men are employed on guard duty. The following stations and outposts are maintained. The figures in brackets indicate the strength of the force, at each place: Shillong (16), Jowai (22), Cherrapunji (9) Ishamati (4), and Nongpoh (6).
- Jail.** There is only one jail in the district which is situated at Shillong. It contains accommodation for 12 under-trial prisoners, and 49 male and 7 female convicts.
- Education.** The history of education in the Khasi Hills is the history of unusual progress. The Welsh Mission commenced their labours in the district in 1844, but, for some time, their efforts were not attended by any considerable measure of success. In 1853, the missionaries drew but a gloomy picture of the state of education in the Khasi Hills. The Reverend Mr. Lewis wrote as follows to Mr. Moffatt Mills:—"I regret to say that there is no regard paid to education in this country; we have tried to induce them by giving prizes, etc., but nothing seems to avail..... The chiefs give us no help, nor do they give any good example to the people.....Not one of the chiefs are able to read themselves, and the Cherra chief is a great opponent to education; both he and his headmen

are always speaking to the people of the unprofitableness of education.”* Few people are, however, less conservative than the Khasis, and during the ensuing twenty years there was a great change in their attitude. In the Report of the Inspector of Schools for Assam for 1874-75 it is said “that a much larger proportion of the Khasis know a little of reading, writing, and arithmetic than is the case, probably, in any other district of either Assam or Bengal.” There were, in that year, 73 schools attended by 1,666 pupils. Since that date the number of schools and pupils has steadily increased, and in 1900-01 there were 325 schools in the hills and 6,535 pupils. To such an extent has education spread that, in 1901, the proportion of persons able to read and write (57 per mille) was larger in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills than in any other district in the Province. This was partly due to the unusually large number of educated women. In 1901, 34 per mille of the female population could read and write, a figure nearly seven times greater than that reported from any other district. The schools are divided into four grades, high, middle, and upper and lower primary. There is only one high school in the district which is situated at Shillong. There are five middle English schools, two at Maokhar, one at Laitkynsew, one at Cherrapunji and one at Jowai.

The primary schools are scattered about the district. The number of schools of different grades, and the

* Report on the Khasi and Jaintia Hills by A. J. Mills, Esq., p. 10 .

number of pupils reading in them in 1900-01 and subsequent years will be found in Table XIII; while details of the expenditure on education will be found in Table XIV. The educational arrangements in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills are still, to a great extent, in the hands of the Welsh Mission. Government maintains a middle school for European children, a high school, and a training school at Shillong, and makes a grant to the mission for the purposes of education. But, whereas the amount expended on this object by the mission in 1903-04 was nearly Rs. 65,000, the cost to Government was less than one-third of this sum. The European school was opened in 1881, closed after the earthquake of 1897, and re-opened three years later. The number of pupils on the rolls in May 1905 was 22.

In the Jowai subdivision education is not much in favour with the unconverted tribesmen, and the majority of the children who attend school are Christians. This is not the case in the Khasi Hills, where the number of unconverted school children considerably exceeds the number of those who are Christians. The inspecting staff maintained by Government consists of two sub-inspectors. Instruction is given in the Khasi language and the text-books are printed in that tongue, but in the English character, as Khasi does not possess any character of its own. At the present day (1905) no less than six Khasis have taken the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Vital statistics are recorded in various scattered areas **Medical.** which in 1901 had a population of 47,294.* In 1903, the figures returned show a birth rate of 30 per mille, and a death rate of 18 per mille. The latter figure is obviously too low, but it is probable that the Khasis on the high plateau enjoy a fairly long mean duration of life. Malaria is common in the Bhoi and War country, but is rare amongst the inhabitants of the higher hills. Excessive consumption of betel-nut tends to produce dyspepsia, which is occasionally followed by dysentery, and bowel diseases are not uncommon. Round worm and itch are common, ring worm is rare. Heart disease is unusually common amongst men, and difficult labour due to malformation of the pelvis amongst women. Both of these calamities are probably due to the practice which prevails amongst both sexes of carrying heavy loads, from a very early age. Cholera does not often appear in the hills, and is regarded by the Khasis with a wholesome terror. In 1879, there was a severe epidemic in the neighbourhood of Shillong. In Maokhar there were 144 deaths, which was equivalent to a death rate of 154 per mille of the population. In the village of Maopat there were 105 deaths, and many other villages in the neighbourhood of Shillong suffered terribly. On the appearance of the disease the villagers in many cases abandoned their homes, leaving the dead unburied and the sick to tend for themselves.

* The areas in question are :—Shillong station and cantonment, Jowai station Nongkrem, a group of 25 villages in the Khyrim State, Nonkhiao, Nongstoin, Maharam, Mylliem group, Marriw, Maoflang, Jirang, Sohiong group, Lait-lyngkot, Nongpoh, Cherra village and station, Shella, Maolong, Borpanji, Sohbar, Ishamati, Bhoi, Nangtalang, Nartiang, Nongbah, Mynso, Shangpung, and Nongjungi.

Dispensaries.

There is a Government hospital at Shillong with accommodation for 13 male and 4 female in-patients, and Government dispensaries at Cherrapunji, Shella, and Nongpoh. Private dispensaries are maintained by the Welsh Calvinistic Mission at Jowai and Laitlyngkot. Statistics showing the expenditure on these dispensaries and the number of cases treated will be found in Tables XV and XVI.

A vaccine depot is maintained at Shillong from which lymph is supplied to other districts in the Province. Five vaccinators under an inspector were employed in the district in 1903-04. The Khasis suffer to a considerable extent from small-pox, but, in spite of this, they do not avail themselves to any marked extent of the opportunities afforded to them. The average number of persons annually vaccinated during each of the five years ending with 1902-03 was only 25 per mille, as compared with 44 per mille in the Province as a whole. This is largely due to the fact that the unconverted Khasis regard small-pox as a powerful god, and, far from trying to avoid the disease, deliberately expose themselves to the risk of infection. This curious belief is carried to such a pitch that, amongst the Syntengs, to be heavily pitted with small-pox is looked upon as adding to the physical beauty of the sufferer.

APPENDIX.

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TABLE I.

Rainfall.

The number of years for which the average has been calculated is shown in bracket below the name of each station.

Months.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.			
	Shillong (34 years).	Jowai (30 years).	Maofang (14 years).	Cherrapunji Police Station (28 years).
January	0.49	1.07	0.67	0.74
February	0.81	2.04	0.69	2.16
March	1.85	6.30	1.93	11.08
April	4.29	10.46	4.81	32.24
May	10.06	26.18	11.41	51.53
June	16.46	63.15	32.11	105.12
July	13.48	43.94	30.00	109.49
August	12.79	34.74	21.10	76.50
September	14.75	31.66	19.26	53.25
October	6.23	12.69	8.73	13.97
November	0.98	1.44	0.47	1.49
December	0.25	0.75	0.28	0.23
Total of year ...	82.44	237.42	131.66	457.80

TABLE II.

General statistics of population.

	SHILLONG SUBDIVISION.		JOWAI SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
POPULATION—							
1901	...	66,250	...	69,079	202,250	97,221	105,029
1891	...	64,320	...	69,063	197,904	94,606	103,298
1881	...	...	...	...	167,804	79,765	88,039
1872	...	...	...	...	140,356	67,852	72,504
VARIATION—							
1891—1901	...	+ 930	...	+ 16	+ 4,346	+ 2,615	+ 1,731
1881—1891	...	...	...	...	+ 30,100	+ 14,841	+ 15,259
1872—1881	...	...	...	...	+ 27,448	+ 11,913	+ 15,535
RELIGION—							
1901.							
Hindus	...	3,725	...	1,554	5,354	3,783	1,571
Muhammadans	...	857	...	239	1,118	878	240

TABLE II.

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Animistics	...	55,502	61,689	28,652	32,432	178,275	84,154	94,121
Total Christians	...	5,027	5,554	3,240	3,500	17,321	8,267	9,054
Presbyterians	...	4,661	5,195	2,935	3,190	15,981	7,596	8,385
Roman Catholics	...	149	158	153	142	602	302	300
Anglican Communion	...	83	69	56	67	275	139	136
Other religions	...	139	43	...	...	182	139	43
CIVIL CONDITION—								
Unmarried	...	36,066	33,599	17,750	15,722	103,197	53,816	49,381
Married	...	25,673	24,159	12,674	14,031	76,537	88,347	38,190
Widowed	...	3,511	11,331	1,547	6,137	22,516	5,058	17,458
LITERACY—								
Literate in Khasi	...	4,599	2,521	1,314	771	9,205	5,913	3,292
Literate in English	...	1,491	333	97	36	1,957	1,588	369
Illiterate	...	58,671	68,288	30,637	35,176	190,772	89,308	101,464
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—								
Khasi	...	56,462	62,743	423	513	120,141	56,885	63,256
Synteng	...	582	785	24,394	28,465	54,246	24,976	29,270
Mikir	...	1,237	1,128	5,614	5,263	13,142	6,751	6,391

TABLE III.
Birth place, race, caste, and occupation.

	SHILLONG SUBDIVISION.		JOWAI SUBDIVISION.		TOTAL DISTRICT.		
	Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH PLACE—							
Born in district	...	...	60,439	67,305	127,744	92,051	102,925
" " other parts of Province	...	...	2,101	1,066	3,167	2,430	1,382
" " Bengal	...	...	949	248	1,197	959	248
" " United Provinces	...	...	402	91	493	406	91
" " Nepal	...	...	1,045	248	1,293	1,046	248
" elsewhere	...	...	314	121	435	329	135

TABLE III.

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RACE AND CASTE—

Kurasian ...	...	27	21	...	...	48	27	21
European (a) ...	...	72	61	9	6	148	81	67
Garos ...	...	3,001	2,767	...	...	5,768	3,001	2,767
Khasi (b) ...	...	56,462	62,743	423	513	120,141	56,385	63,256
Mikir ...	...	1,251	1,137	5,332	5,123	13,843	6,583	6,260
Synteng (b) ...	...	582	785	24,394	28,485	54,246	24,976	29,270
OCCUPATION —								
Workers ...	...	...	...	...	...	121,340	59,923	61,417
Dependents ...	...	...	...	...	...	80,910	...	...
TOTAL SUPPORTED—								
Land-holders	..	43,217	48,475	22,799	23,209	137,700	66,016	71,684
Tenants ...	...	4,297	4,594	3,362	3,859	16,112	7,659	8,453
General labourers	...	7,800	9,453	1,957	3,860	23,070	9,767	13,313

(a) Includes allied races.

(b) Figures taken from the language Table as the caste Table does not include the Native Christians.

TABLE

Fire protection and outturn of timber and

Details.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.
Area in square miles under protection.	7	7	7	7	
Area in square miles protected ...	7	7	7	7	
Percentage	100	100	100	100	
Cost Rs. ...	1,252	1,127	1,152	1,239	
Reserved Forests.					
Area in square miles ...	51	51	51	51	
Outturn (Government and purchasers only).					
Timber c. ft. ...	5,450	6,621	196	700	
Unclassed State Forests.					
Area in square miles ...	100	100	100	100	
Outturn (Government and purchasers only).					
Timber c. ft. ...	36,396	38,650	66,982	16,120	
Fuel c. ft. ...	1,880	14,430	5,616	12,448	
Rubber Rs. ...	658	...	73	1,947	
Forest receipts Rs. ...	3,553	2,432	2,588	10,226	
Forest expenditure Rs. ...	5,182	4,446	4,310	9,754	
Surplus or Deficit ...	-1,629	-2,014	-1,722	+472	

TABLE IV.

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IV.

fuel and value of minor forest produce.

1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE V.
*Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee
 at selected marts.*

						SHILLONG.			JOWAI.	
						Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.	Common rice.	Salt.
1880	{	2nd Week of February	...	...	...	9½	5¼	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	8½	5¼	5¼	...	...
1890	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	8	6½	13	13	5½
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	8	7	12	11	5½
1900	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	5½	7½	9	10	5
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	11½	8	10	9	5
1901	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	10	8	10	10	5
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	8½	8	10	8½	5
1902	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	9	8	10	10½	5
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	9	8	10	11	5
1903	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	10	8	10	11½	6
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	10	8	10	9½	6½
1904	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	10	8½	12	12	6½
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	11	8	11½	12	5½
1905	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	13½	8½	12	15	6½
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1906	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1907	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1908	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1909	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1910	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1911	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1912	{	Do. do. of February	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
		Do. do. of August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE
Statistics of criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
SHILLONG SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, secs. 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	1	...	4	2	3	1
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	4	3	...	...	2	2
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, secs. 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	3	...	3	3	...	...
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, secs. 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	12	4	11	2	8	8
(v) Serious criminal force, secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357.	1	1	2	1	1	...
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	3	3	3	...	1	1
(vii) Dacoity, secs. 395, 397 and 398	1	1	...	...	1	1
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	3	...	4	...	5	...
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, secs. 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	12	4	8	3	5	2
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, secs. 341—344.	1	...	...	...	1	1
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property.	...	...	1	...	...	...

vi.

civil justice.

		True.	Detected.
1905.		True.	Detected.
1906.		True.	Detected.
1907.		True.	Detected.
1908.		True.	Detected.
1909.		True.	Detected.
1910.		True.	Detected.
1911.		True.	Detected.
1912.		True.	Detected.

TABLE
Statistics of criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True	Detected.
SHILLONG SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xii) Theft, sec. 379—382 ...	47	19	28	13	37	20
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, secs. 411 and 414.	...	...	...	..	...	...
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448.	3	1	1	1	1	1
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	...	...	3	1	4	4
Total ...	91	36	68	26	69	41
JOWAI SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, secs. 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	...	...	...	...	..	...
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity &c.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, secs. 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	3	3	2	2	...	...
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, secs. 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	1	1	2	1	...	...
(v) Serious criminal force, secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357.	...	...	...	...	...	...

TABLE VI.

VI.

civil justice—(continued).

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detect-d.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
JOWAI SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	...	...	...	...	1	...
(vii) Locoity, secs. 395, 397 and 398	...	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	...	...	1	...	...	...
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, secs. 449—452, 454, 455, and 457—460.	1	1	10	10	...	...
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, secs. 341—344.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property.	...	...	...	...	1	...
(xii) Theft, secs. 379—382	5	3	5	3	4	4
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, secs. 411 and 414.	1	1	...	...	...	...
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448.	1	...	1	1	...	...
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	...	...	...	...	...	...
Total	12	9	21	17	6	4

TABLE
Statistics of criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, secs. 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	1	...	4	2	3	1
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	4	3	...	...	2	2
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder, and culpable homicide, secs. 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	6	3	5	5	...	...
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, secs. 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	13	5	13	3	8	8
(v) Serious criminal force, secs. 353, 354, 356 and 357.	1	1	2	1	1	...
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	3	3	3	...	2	1
(vii) Dacoity, secs. 395, 397 and 398.	1	1	...	...	1	1
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, secs. 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	3	...	5	...	5	..
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, secs. 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	13	5	18	13	5	2
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, secs. 341—344.	1	...	...	...	1	1

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civil justice—(continued).

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	1	...	1	...
(xii) Theft, secs. 379—382	52	22	33	16	41	24
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, secs. 411 and 414.	1	1	...	...	...	...
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, secs. 453, 456, 447 and 448.	4	1	2	2	1	1
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	...	...	3	1	4	4
Total	103	45	89	43	75	45
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and movables	136		90		134	
Title and other suits	4		4		13	
Rent suits	1		...		...	
Total	141		94		147	

TABLE
Finance.

Principal heads.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue ...	4,907	8,624	9,352	9,672	9,119	
House tax ...	27,230	26 699	27,891	30,530	28,278	
Lime quarries ...	17,646	15,984	12,705	9,811	11,935	
Judicial stamps ...	3,591	6,467	5,356	4,326	4,703	
Non-judicial stamps ...	1,751	2,201	1,890	1,998	2,321	
Opium ...	10,766	16,912	17,637	21,684	18,096	
Country spirits ...	5,000	6,222	5,019	5,876	5 029	
Ganja ...	1,941	700	513	464	550	
Other heads of excise ...	476	240	202	201	106	
Assessed taxes ...	9,658	13,909	12 889	12 600	11,219	
Number of assesses per ‰	1	1	1	1	1	
Forests ...	1,958	3,553	2,432	2,588	10,226	
Registration ...	227	274	189	192	202	
Total ...	85,151	1,01,785	96,075	99,942	1,01,784	

TABLE VII.

VII.

—*Receipts.*

1905-06.	Rs.
1906-07.	Rs.
1907-08.	Rs.
1908-09.	Rs.
1909-10.	Rs.
1910-11.	Rs.
1911-12.	Rs.

TABLE

Miscellaneous

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
SHILLONG SUBDIVISION.				
Elephants	3,300	350	...	2,695
Lime quarries	15,984	12,705	9,811	11,895
House tax	5,418	5,484	5,652	5,770
Total revenue	26,419	21,233	18,154	23,496
JOWAI SUBDIVISION.				
Elephants	...	...	...	2,650
Fisheries	5,131	4,861	4,579	5,880
House tax	21,281	22,407	24,878	22,508
Total revenue	26,637	27,622	29,780	31,346
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Elephants	3,300	350	...	5,345
Lime quarries	15,984	12,705	9,811	11,935
Fisheries	5,131	4,861	4,579	5,880
House tax	26,699	27,891	30,530	28,278
Other heads	1,942	3,048	3,013	3,404
Total revenue	53,056	48,855	47,943	54,842

TABLE

Ex

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
SHILLONG SUBDIVISION.				
Number of opium shops ...	2	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	3,250	3,900	3,037	2,533
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	2 25 0	3 8 0	2 22 0	2 11 0
Duty on opium sold Rs. ...	2,993	3,648	2,907	2,593
Number of ganja shops ...	1	1	1	1
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	484	333	320	370
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	0 24 0	0 20 0	0 16 0	0 20 0
Duty on ganja sold Rs. ...	216	180	144	180
Number of country spirit shops ..	3	3	3	3
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	6,222	5,019	5,876	5,029
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	240	202	201	106
JOWAI SUBDIVISION.				
Number of opium shops ...	4	3	3	3
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	2,138	1,938	3,000	1,000
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	7 19 5	7 6 0	11 7 0	10 20 0
Duty on opium sold Rs. ...	8,531	8,151	12,740	11,970
Number of ganja shops ...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	...	...	...	...
Amount of ganja issued Mds. ...	...	...	...	...

TABLE IX.

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IX

cise.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.

TABLE

Ex

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
JOWAI SUBDIVISION—(concluded).				
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs. ...	...	...	...	...
Number of country spirit shops...	...	...	...	...
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	...	...	...	...
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	...	...	...	...
TOTAL DISTRICT.				
Number of opium shops ...	6	5	5	5
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	5,388	5,838	6,037	3,533
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Opium issued ...	10 4 5	10 14 0	13 29 0	12 31 0
Duty on opium sold Rs. ...	11,524	11,799	15,647	14,563
Number of ganja shops ...	1	1	1	1
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	484	333	320	370
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	0 24 0	0 20 0	0 16 0	0 20 0
Duty on ganja sold Rs. ...	216	180	144	180
Number of country spirit shops...	3	3	3	3
Amount paid for licenses Rs. ...	6,222	5,019	5,876	5,029
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	240	202	201	106

IX.

cise—(concluded).

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.

TABLE X.
Municipal.
Shillong Station.

Sources of income.	INCOME.		Heads of expenditure.	EXPENDITURE.	
	1890-91.	1900-01.		1890-91.	1900-01.
	Rs.	Rs.		Rs.	Rs.
Opening balance ...	254	1,215	Administration ...	1,169	2,857
Tax on houses and lands.	4,687	8,949	Conservancy ...	4,878	11,196
Pounds ...	413	193	Public Works ...	724	5,998
Fees from markets...	600	505	Public instruction	200	660
Grants from Government and Local funds.	600	22,509	Water-supply ...	988	17,134
Water rate ..	2,033	3,912	Other heads ...	2,401	3,214
Conservancy ..	1,111	2,712	Closing balance ...	275	668
Other sources ...	937	1,741	Total ...	10,635	41,727
Total ...	10,635	41,727			

TABLE XI.
Strength of police force.

Particulars.				1881.	1891	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.						
SUPERVISING STAFF.						
Inspector ...	...	...	...	1	1	1
SUBORDINATE STAFF.						
Sub-Inspectors ...	...	...	...	4	4	7
Head Constables...	...	...	...	13	14	14
Constables ...	...	...	...	146	159	183
Union and Municipal Police	...	...	...	7	.	...
Total expenditure	...	...	Rs.	29,769	32,121	42,190

Actual strength for 1881 and sanctioned strength for other years.
As the full sanctioned number of Sub-Inspectors was not entertained during the year 1901, only the actual number of Sub-Inspectors and Head Constables is shown for that year.

TABLE XII.
Jail statistics.
 Shillong Jail.

				1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population	...	Males		40.58	34.34	29.21
		Females		2.70	0.37	0.58
Rate of jail mortality per ‰	...	...		...	230	...
Expenditure on jail maintenance	...	Rs.		7,320	4,848	4,216
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners)		Rs.		59	51	70
Profits on jail manufacture	...	Rs.		1,413	1,441	1,302
Earnings per prisoner (a)	...	Rs.		33	44	47

* On rations and clothing only.

(a) Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE XIII.
Education.

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
SECONDARY SCHOOLS.												
<i>High Schools.</i>												
Number	1	1	1	1								
" of boys reading in High School classes.	65	63	54	51								
" of boys reading in Middle School classes.	24	27	24	33								
" of boys reading in Primary classes.	42	53	71	78								
<i>Middle English Schools.</i>												
Number	4	4	5	5								
" of boys reading in Middle School classes.	63	69	107	105								
" of boys reading in Primary classes.	318	330	443	473								

TABLE XIII.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.								
<i>Upper Primary Schools.</i>			3	3	2	3	3	2
Number	...	...	32	39	11	10		
" of boys reading in Upper Primary classes.								
" of boys reading in Lower Primary classes.			3	64	61	55		
<i>Lower Primary Schools.</i>			292	309	310	321		
Number	...	...	(a)	(a)	2,351	1,371		
" of boys reading in three Upper classes.			3,809	3,803	1,514	2,690		
" of boys reading in Lower classes.								
FEMALE EDUCATION.			25	23	23	27		
No. of girls' schools	...	...						
No. of girls reading (whether in girls' or boys' schools) in :—								
High schools	...	...	...	...	...	...		
Middle English schools	...	...	2	183	232	249		
Upper Primary schools	...	...	201	140	144	135		
Lower Primary schools	...	...	1,976	1,877	1,917	2,011		

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XIV.
Educational finance.

Particulars.	No. of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM					Expenditure per head of scholar.
		Provincial revenues.	District and Muni- cipal funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. a. p.
Training and special schools	...	4,241	...	...	...	4,241	212 0 9
<i>Secondary boys' schools :—</i>							
Upper (High) ...	1	1,241	...	2,784	...	4,025	30 11 7
Lower (Middle) ...	4	...	360	657	5,582	6,599	17 5 2
<i>Primary boys' schools :—</i>							
Upper ...	3	122	...	22	1,260	1,404	30 8 4
Lower ...	292	4,956	...	13	44,603	49,572	9 4 8
Girls' schools ...	24	783	180	320	3,603	4,886	7 0 5
Total	325	11,343	540	3,796	55,048	70,727	10 11 3

TABLE XV.
Medical.

	1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries ...	(a) 3	4	(d) 5
Daily average number of in-door patients.	7.27	8.38	10.32
" " " out-door "	33.32	84.15	128.28
Cases treated ...	2,977	16,676	25,684
Operations performed ...	95	692	816
Total income Rs. ...	3,626	11,748	9,008
Income from Government Rs. ...	1,714	2,517	4,894
Income from Local and Municipal funds Rs. ...	...	(b) 5,767	270
Subscriptions Rs. ...	1,194	2,877	2,146
Total expenditure Rs. ...	3,573	11,740	8,997
Expenditure on establishment Rs. ...	1,294	3,215	4,196
Ratio per mille of persons vaccinated...	(d) 9.43	15.83	21.46
Cost per successful case Rs. ...	Not available.	0 3 10½	0 6 2

(a) One of them was open for eight months only.

(b) Rs. 5,617 paid from Welsh Mission Fund.

(c) Returns were not received from one of these dispensaries. Excludes the private dispensary at Jowai from which also no returns were received.

(d) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE
Dispen

Name of dispen- sary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Shillong...	4,596	7,990	5,484	9,040	5,110	8,165	4,599	5,612	5,426	4,937		
Cherra ...	1,008	6,232	1,172	7,781	1,096	6,942	1,553	8,248	1,790	8,709		
Laitlyng- kot (aided).	2,883	1,702	*...	*...	1,714	*...	1,670	706	402	1,349		
Shella ...	1,194	8,019	1,627	7,422	901	6,704	649	6,409	1,179	4,655		
Nongpoh...	683	1,673	715	1,441	726	1,522	948	1,499	1,049	1,621		

• Return not

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CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Area and boundaries—General appearance of district—Mountain system—River system—Lakes and marshes—Geology—Economic geology—Climate and rainfall—Tornadoes—Earthquakes—Fauna.

The district of the Garo Hills is bounded on the north and west by the district of Goalpara, on the south by the Bengal district of Mymensingh, and on the east by the district of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It lies between 25°9' and 26 1' N, and 89°49' and 91°2' E. and covers an area of 3,140 square miles.

Almost the whole of the district consists of hilly country, though here and there along the frontier there are stretches of flat land and valleys which run up between the hills. The largest blocks of flat land are to be found at the point where the Bogai debouches on the plain, near Mahendraganj on the southern frontier of the district, and near the Rajabala and Phulbari *hats* on the western frontier.

The main range, on a spur of which the station of Tura has been built, runs through the district from north-west to south-east. Nokrek (4,652 feet), the highest peak in the range, is situated about eight miles to the south-east of Tura, and from this point the hills gradually decline in height. Kailas, east of the Someswari, is 3,375 feet above the level of the sea, and Balpakuram, on the border of the Khasi Hills, 2,831 feet. About five miles north of the Tura range, there is a much

shorter chain of hills, known as the Arbela range, whose highest peak is about 3,277 feet above sea level. The rest of the district consists of a tumbled mass of hills, whose general tendency is to run north and south. Several of the peaks are between 1,500 and 2,000 feet in height, but the general level is considerably less than this. In their original state the whole of these hills must have been covered with dense tropical forest, and much of this forest still remains. Where, however, the hillsides have been cleared for cultivation, bamboos and high reed jungle cover the sites of the fallowing *jhums*. The sides of the hills are usually fairly steep but not precipitous, but an exception should, perhaps, be made in the case of the Tura and Arbela ranges. Here, though there are few rocks or precipices to be seen, the ascent to the summit except by one of the recognised paths would be by no means easy even for a man on foot. The hills, as a rule, take the form of ridges sloping steeply to the valleys with which they are intersected, but any boldness of outline which they may possess is effectually concealed by the luxuriance of the vegetation in which they are enshrouded. The Kailas hill, which is called Chitmang by the Garos, stands out an abrupt hog-backed mass, which towers above most of the hills in the vicinity. It thus appears to be higher than it really is, and it is probably on this account that it is regarded by the Garos as the home of the spirits of the dead.

**River system. The
Krishnai.**

The district contains no river navigable by boats of four tons burthen throughout the year, and only

five which can be said to be navigable at all in their course within the hills, viz., the Krishnai, Kalu, Bhugai, Nitai, and Someswari. The Krishnai, which is called Damring by the Garos, takes its rise in the hills to the north of the Arbela range, near the village of Mandalanggiri, whence it flows in a northerly direction past the villages of Rongrengiri, Thapa, and Songma to Jira, a frontier village, where it leaves the district and enters Goalpara. This river is navigable by canoes in the cold season as far as Rongrengiri, but there is very little traffic. During the earthquake of 1897, the greater part of the bed of the Krishnai between Dekachang and Jira sank and formed a lake about eight miles long and in places nearly a mile in width. The river enters this lake near Dekachang.

The Kalu is known to the Garos as the Ganol. It **The Kalu.** takes its rise at Domagitok on the northern face of the Tura range about nine miles from Tura station. It leaves the district near Putimari and flows for about ten miles through Goalpara. It again appears near the Rangapani hill, and for about two miles forms the boundary of the district from the village Rangapani to Peshkar Bhita. It then falls into the Jinjiram, near Kakripara in the Goalpara district. Its principal tributary is the Rongkon, which rises near Tura station. The Kalu flows past the villages of Maheshgiri, Durangiri, Damalgiri, and Garobahda. It is navigable for a distance of ten miles in the hills from Harigao as far as Damalgiri, which is within twelve miles of Tura, by boats of two

tons burden, but only during the rainy season. Snags in the river bed make navigation difficult.

The Bhugai.

The Bhugai is known to the Garos as the Bugi. It takes its rise on the south face of the Tura range near Nokrek, about 8 miles in a direct line from Tura. It passes the Dalu *hat* and falls into the old bed of the Brahmaputra above the station of Nasirabad in Mymensingh.

The Nitai.

The Nitai is known to the Garos as the Dareng and takes its rise on the southern slopes of the Tura watershed. It passes the villages of Adapgiri, Chakpatgiri, Sembu, Chota Sembu, Silkigiri and Bamongiri, and at Ghoshgaon enters the district of Mymensingh, where it falls into the Kanks river. Canoes can proceed as far as Chakpatgiri when the river is full of water.

The Someswari.

The Someswari, or, as it is called by the Garos, the Simsang, is the largest stream in the district. It takes its rise on Nokrek, and drains the country between the Tura and Arbela ranges and the valley of the Rongdi. The river follows a very winding course and at first flows in an easterly direction for about thirty miles. It then takes a turn to the south and runs generally in a southerly direction, till it emerges on the plains in pargana Susang of Mymensingh. It is navigable for fair sized boats as far as Siju, about twenty miles from the point where it issues from the hills. Beyond this point dug-out canoes can occasionally be used as far as Rongkaibibra, the point of junction of the Someswari and the Rongkai river. The upper reaches of the river can hardly be described as

navigable, as the rapids are long and dangerous. The principal tributaries are the Rongkai, the Rongdi, and the Chibok.

The banks of the rivers in the hills are usually steep, and in some places they flow through deep ravines. The bed is rocky, and the scenery generally wild and beautiful. The Maheshkhali river, which forms a part of the eastern boundary of the district, flows a subterranean course for many miles under the limestone rocks which form its bed. It disappears not far from the Yindka peak, and reappears again near Billar Dhoba.

The only lake in the district is the one to which **Lakes and** reference has been already made, and which has been **marshes.** formed by the subsidence of the valley of the Krishnai. The lake was originally the site of a dense forest, but in places it is now as much as twelve feet deep. The only other *bils* of any importance are the Bara *bil* in the Kalumalupara pargana, and the Katta *bil* between Kalaichar and Mahendraganj.

The greater part of the Garo Hills are formed of **Geology.** gneissic rocks. Upon them are superimposed strata referable to the cretaceous system, which consist of sandstones and conglomerates with subordinate clays and occasional coal seams. The cretaceous beds are overlaid by rocks of nummulitic age, consisting of limestone and sandstone with interstratified shales. Above the nummulitics there are upper tertiary rocks, composed mainly of sandstones, which form low hills along the border of

the Mymensingh district. Marine fossils have been met with in the lower beds of these sandstones.*

Near Siju, on the Someswari, there is a large cave called by the Garos Dobakkol or the cave of bats, as it is haunted by thousands of these creatures. The entrance is small but it leads into a large chamber hung with stalactites, which stretches away gradually decreasing in size into the hill. The Garos have a tradition that there is an exit near Tura, but the cave has never been properly explored.

**Economic
geology.**

So far as has been at present ascertained all the coal of these hills is of cretaceous origin. There are outcrops along the southern edge of the Tura range, but the principal coalfield is situated in the valley of the Someswari near Daranggiri. This field is described by Mr. Tom De La Touche in the Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XV, Part III. It is situated on both sides of the Someswari river, where it turns south in a long reach, before cutting through the main range near Jankaray village. The field is about ten miles in length from west to east extending from a little to the west of Daranggiri to Rongdim in the Khasi Hills, and about six miles from north to south from the Rongdi

* I am indebted to Mr. Bose for this brief account of the geology of the Garo Hills. The following works on the subject may be consulted. Records of the Geological Survey of India, 1868, Part I. This contains a somewhat incomplete account of the coal of the Garo Hills, but the district at that time had been neither pacified nor properly explored. Memoirs of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. VII, Part I, 1869. This contains a good account of the Shillong plateau and incidentally of the Garo Hills. Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. VII, Part II, which contains an account of the coalfields of the district, and a note on its general geology. Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XV, Part III, which contains an account of the Daranggiri field; and Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XX, Part I, 1887, which contains a note on the general geology of the Garo Hills.

stream to the Rongkai. The coal measures cover an area of about fifty square miles, but the only area in which they could be profitably worked is a tract, about twenty square miles in area, between Daranggiri and the Rengchi stream. Near Daranggiri village there is a seam exposed which is seven feet thick. Mr. De La Touche calculates that the total quantity of coal in the field must be about seventy-six million tons. This estimate is, however, framed upon very imperfect data, and it would be unsafe to act upon it without further verification. The coal varies very much in quality. Certain samples yielded as much as 52 and 48 per cent of fixed carbon, while other pieces taken from the portion of the field which Mr. De La Touche condemned as quite unfit for paying operations, had only 14 and 4 per cent of fixed carbon. Mr. De La Touche has recorded the following observations on the facilities for working the principal seam.*

“Except in the south-west corner of the field, where the strata are bent up sharply against the gneiss of the main range, they are either horizontal or dip at very low angles, and there seems to be an absolute freedom from faults over the whole area. The greater part of the seam is above the level of the principal stream, so that the coal might be economically extracted, and the mines drained by adits. Moreover, as the rock immediately above the coal is generally a fine clay rock, tolerably impervious to water, the mines would to a certain extent be kept dry by it. That part of the seam which dips below the surface of the rivers would have to be got at by shafts, but the strata above the coal, consisting of about 300 feet of sandstone and shales, would present no difficulty to the sinking of these.”

* Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XV, Part III, page 178

In 1900 a prospecting license over this field was issued to Mr. G. L. Garth of Dacca, but no attempt has as yet (1905) been made to work the coal. ,

**Limestone
and pottery
clay.**

Limestone has been found on the high ground to the east of Daranggiri, but the thickness and extent of the deposit has not been ascertained. At Siju, to the south of the main range, there is a large deposit of limestone of good quality. A white, shaly indurated clay, or lithomarge, which would probably be useful as a pottery clay, occurs in most places where the cretaceous rocks are exposed, in bands of two or three feet in thickness. There is a thick deposit of it in the station of Tura, where it has been used for whitewash.*

**Climate and
rainfall.**

The station of Tura is situated on a spur of the main range, and, as it is only about 1,300 feet above the level of the sea, the temperature at certain seasons of the year is fairly high. The highest maximum and lowest minimum temperature in each month in 1884 will be found in Table I. March and April are for Assam unusually warm, and in 1885, the thermometer in the latter month rose to nearly 100°, an exceptionally high temperature for Assam. It is thought that the fact that the *jhums* are being burnt about this time may possibly tend to produce a rise of temperature. From November to February are the only really cold months in the year, as though the heavy rainfall in the summer months keeps down the temperature, it renders the atmosphere exceedingly steamy and oppressive. The average rainfall recor-

* Records of the Geological Survey of India, Vol. XX, Part I.

ded at Tura will be found in Table II. 125 inches of rain falls in the year, more than two-thirds of which are precipitated in the four months, May to August. In four other months, November to February, there are altogether less than two inches of rain.

In 1900, the northern portion of the Garo Hills was **Tornadoes.** visited by a tornado of most exceptional violence. On the 18th of April, a violent storm traversed the portion of Goalpara which lies between the Brahmaputra and the Garo Hills, and finally disappeared into the latter district. The path of the storm was only about a quarter of a mile in width, but within this limited area the strength of the hurricane was quite phenomenal. Thirty persons were killed outright in Goalpara, and eighty-eight injured. In the Garo Hills the village of Shondana, which was exposed to the full force of the wind, was utterly demolished and six persons were killed and nine injured. This storm occurred about 4 p.m. in the afternoon, and on the following day, but about two hours earlier, there was a second hurricane, which followed a line a little to the north of the storm of the 18th. It struck the village of Silkata, killing eight persons and injuring one, and blew down trees and houses. One of the killed, a boy, had his head torn off and his back broken, while three others had their heads completely smashed and their brains dashed out.

The earthquake of July 14th, 1885, was distinctly felt **Earth-quakes.** in Tura. No serious damage was done, but the record room was so severely shaken that it became unsafe, and the roofs of all the Government buildings were strained.

On June 12th, 1897, the district did not escape so lightly. Fortunately, owing to the time at which the shock occurred, *i.e.*, about 5 P.M. on a Saturday afternoon, and to the fact that there were no masonry buildings in the district, the loss of life was comparatively small, and the total death roll only amounted to twenty-seven. The public offices and the residences of the officials were rendered uninhabitable, the posts supporting them were wrenched loose, the floors buckled, and the roofs sagged. The damage done to the treasury is thus described by the Deputy Commissioner :*

"This building stood on a gentle slope, a few feet from the top of a steep hill side. It had a strong frame of timber, walls and roof of corrugated iron, and a massive plinth of cement and large stones. The plinth was 70 feet long, and 32 feet 6 inches wide, with a maximum and minimum height of 8 feet and 1 foot 6 inches respectively. The floor was of concrete and cement to a depth of 9 inches. Solid as it was, it crumbled away like a pile of sand before the first shock had stopped. The stones rolled out on all sides, and the floor was broken into little pieces. The whole building tilted over towards the *khud*, wrenching the main posts in every direction, and uprooting or breaking the smaller ones which supported the verandah."

The houses owned by the American Baptist Mission escaped, however, with comparative immunity. The reason, was, perhaps, to be found in the fact that the posts instead of being driven deep into the ground, rested, for the most part, on stones almost flush with the earth, while some of the walls were protected with stout planks, a fact which must undoubtedly have added to their capacity for resistance. There were serious landslips in the hills, and much damage was done to

* Letter No. 100 G., dated 24th July, 1897.

roads and bridges. In the plains, culturable land was damaged by sand, but, as a set-off against this, *bils* were silted up and rendered fit for cultivation. The attitude of the Garos towards the earthquake is thus described by the Deputy Commissioner :—

“The Garos generally were thrown into a state of stolid bewilderment by the earthquake. They left their fields, and retired into their village houses to await further catastrophes. The Garo belief is that the world is a square flat body, hung up by a string at each corner. There is a squirrel always trying to gnaw these strings, but to prevent it a demon was appointed. This demon, however, neglected his duty, and in order that his attention might not in the future be diverted from his work, he was struck blind. Now that he can't see, the squirrel, of course, has the best of it, and it is feared that when one or two of the strings are gnawed, the earth will be turned upside down. Another story is that Her Most Gracious Majesty, not content with the last earthquake, has ordered another and more vigorous one to be followed by a cyclone. That it is in the power of the Maharani to do so is never doubted. One man asked for a *parwana* to forbid the hill behind his house from slipping down on to him. Had the houses of the European officials in Tura not been wrecked, the Garos would have made up their minds without doubt that the recent catastrophe was the work of the Sahebs, and excited by the wild stories in common circulation they might have given some trouble.”

The larger kinds of game are common in the hills, the **Fauna-** list including elephants, tigers, leopards, bears, wild pig, and deer, of which the principal varieties are the sambar (*cervus unicolor*) and the barking deer (*cervulus muntjac*). The swamp deer (*cervus duvauceli*) is also found in the low country at the foot of the hills.

The serow (*nemorhaedus*) is sometimes seen, and wild dogs are occasionally met with. Wild buffalo are found in the valleys of the Bhugai, Nitai, and Someswari, and mithun (*bos gaurus*) are fairly common on the main

range and far down the slopes on either side. Small game include peafowl, wild duck of various kinds, snipe, partridges, pheasants, and jungle fowl. Wild elephants are much feared by the Garos, as they often injure the crops and occasionally cause loss of life. In 1904, 8 persons were killed by wild elephants, 5 by tigers, 2 by bears, and 2 by wild pigs. If the returns can be relied upon it would appear that the number of deaths due to wild animals has decreased considerably since our occupation of the country, as in the two years 1883 and 1884 it is said that 70 persons were killed by tigers alone. Rewards were paid for the destruction of 1 wild elephant, 12 tigers, 38 leopards, and 54 bears in 1904. Between 1877-78, and 1902-03, elephants were hunted on no less than 20 occasions by the Government Khedda Department, and about 190 animals were annually captured. In 1886-87, over 300 animals were caught, no less than 136 having been impounded in a single drive. Since the withdrawal of the Department from Assam, the right of hunting in the different mahals, of which there are altogether five, has been put up to auction when it has seemed expedient.

CHAPTER II.

HISTORY.

Early legends of Garos—Oppression by the Goalpara zamindars—
Enquiry by Mr. Scott into Garo raids—The Paghul riots—
Garo raids and expeditions—Posting of officer at Tura—Survey
of hills in 1870—Murder of a coolie in 1871, and punitive mea-
sures—Subsequent history uneventful.

The history of the district cannot be disassociated **Early legends of Garos.** from the history of the tribe, who form the immense mass of the inhabitants, and have given their name to the hills in which they live. The Garos are believed to be members of the great Bodo family, who are said to have entered Assam from the North-East, and to have spread in successive waves, not only over the valley of the Brahmaputra, but even beyond it to the hills of Tippera. According to their own traditions, the Garos came originally from Thibet and settled in Kuch Bihar. From there they were driven to the neighbourhood of Jogighopa, but they were again compelled to fly towards the south by the king of the country, and his ally the Raja of Kuch Bihar. Their next wanderings were towards Gauhati, where they were enslaved by the Assamese, but released by a Khasi prince, who settled them in the neighbourhood of Boko. The place was, however, infested by tiger-men, and the Garos then moved into the Habraghat pargana, whence they finally wandered into the hills in which they now are found.

**Garos
oppressed
by Goulpara
Zamindars.**

The story of the dealings of the Bengal zamindars and of Government with the Garos will be found in the pages of Mackenzie's "North-East Frontier of Bengal," (pages 245-268) and need only be briefly summarised below. In the days of Mughal rule the country lying between the Brahmaputra and the Garo Hills was occupied by powerful zamindars, who only paid a nominal tribute to the Imperial Government and enjoyed a position of semi-independence. The border chiefs with whom the Garos were principally brought in contact were those of Karaibari, Kalumalupara, Habraghat, and Mechpara. One of their duties was to protect the plains from the aggressions of the hillmen, but their principal object was to enrich themselves with trade, cotton being a valuable article of export from the hills.

**Mechpara
and Karaibari
zamindars subdue
outer hills.**

In 1775-76, the zamindars of Mechpara and Karaibari entered the hills to avenge some Garo raids of more than usual atrocity. They remained for some years in the hills and brought a considerable tract of land under their control. The principal chief of the southern hills at that time was a man called Renghta, and even he became subject to the Karaibari zamindar. This zamindar was an individual of much force of character, who tried to obtain for himself a position of absolute independence. He declined to pay his revenue, opposed all attempts to determine the boundaries of his zamindari, and it was not till 1815 that he was finally arrested.

**Enquiry by
Mr. Scott
into Garo
raids.**

The lawlessness of the zamindars in the plains was naturally enough reflected in the hills, and, in 1816, Mr. Scott, afterwards Agent to the Governor-General on

the North-East Frontier, was deputed to enquire into the matter. It could hardly be denied that action of some kind was called for, as during the ten years ending with 1816, 157 villages had been burnt by Garo raiders and 178 persons killed. The condition of affairs is thus summarised in his report—

1. Karaibari.—The chaudhury of this estate having been the most vigorous and least under control had reduced nearly all the Garos actually living on his estate to the condition of ordinary ryots, but a few of the frontier chiefs still remain merely tributary, subject to the provision of cotton on terms highly favourable to the zamindar, and paying sums of money on the occasions of Hindu festivals. Of these the chief was Renghta, who had been prevented as before shown from emancipating himself from the chaudhury's supremacy.

2. Kalumalupara had been in feeble hands. The Garos on its borders were virtually independent, though some paid a nominal cotton tribute.

3. The Mechpara chaudhury had in 1776-77 effected large conquests, but was succeeded soon after by a minor, and now only a few outlying Garo villages in the plains remained in the condition of ordinary ryots' villages, and in these the Regulations of Government were current. But in the hill tracts the Garo chiefs were merely tributary, paying cotton on terms favourable to the zamindar and occasionally admitting him as their criminal judge.

4. Habraghat.—Here the Garos on the first ranges of hills had been reduced to unconditional submission, but had been liberally treated and their Sardars transformed into Jagirdars, charged with the defence of the passes against the tribes of the interior. They were quite under the Regulation of Government.

As a result of this enquiry it was decided to completely remove the Garos from the control of the zamindars, to prohibit the levying of the illegal dues which had been the cause of so much friction, and to place the frontier markets under the direct management of Government. Mr. Scott entered into relations with 121 Garo chiefs

living west of the Someswari, and as long as he was able to give the matter his personal attention, the peace of the frontier seems to have been undisturbed.

The tribe at this time was divided into the following three sections : the Garos settled in the plains who did not differ materially from ordinary raiyats, the Garos in the outer ranges who had to some extent been subdued and were assessed to tribute, and the independent or *bemulwa* Garos who occupied the higher hills in the interior.

**The Paghul
riots, 1825.**

In 1825, there was some trouble near Sherpur on the borders of Mymensingh, in which the Garos inhabiting the lower ranges were implicated. At the end of the eighteenth century, a Muhammadan Fakir had settled here and had attracted a small following, called in derision by their neighbours *paghuls* or fools. In 1813, he died and was succeeded by his son Tippu, who, with his mother, laid claim to miraculous powers. The villagers, many of whom were Garos, were much oppressed by the zamindars. In 1825, a body of 700 men assembled to attack their landlords at Sherpur, and serious rioting took place. The *paghuls* were ultimately subdued, the country they inhabited was held to be outside the borders of the permanently settled estates, and the agrarian grievance was removed. In 1833, the *paghuls* again attempted to stir up a peasant rising, but it came to nothing.

**Unrest on
frontier.**

About this time there was a certain amount of unrest upon the frontier. On enquiry being made it was found that it was largely due to the oppressive conduct of the

officials at the Garo markets. An expedition was sent up into the hills in 1837 under a Mr. Strong. The arrears of tribute were realized without difficulty, many of the Garo villages tendered their submission, and all this was effected without any loss of life on either side.

Occasional murders still took place, and in 1848 it was found necessary to send an expedition to subdue the Dassanni Garos, who had murdered one of their headmen with all his family for the somewhat inadequate reason that he had requested the tribe to pay tribute which had been in arrears since 1834.

In 1852, the Goalpara frontier was in a very disturbed condition. Seven raids took place, in which forty-four persons were killed. An expedition was despatched into the hills, which burnt a village, but as the raiders were not surrendered, it was decided to blockade the hillmen. This was attended with a certain measure of success, as they were to a great extent dependent on the profits of the cotton trade, and some of the offenders were given up to justice. For three or four years there was peace upon the frontier, but towards the end of 1856, the hillmen broke out again, and between 1857 and 1859 there were nine raids made into Goalpara, which resulted in the loss of twenty lives.

Further disturbances occurred along the frontier, the closing of the markets proved ineffectual, and in 1861 an expedition was despatched into the hills. The troops advanced from two sides, from Goalpara and Mymensingh, and succeeded in reaching and punishing most of the offending villages. Arrangements were then made

**Raids in
1852 and 1857**

**Two expedi-
tions have no
practical
results.**

for the appointment of local headmen who were to be responsible for the arrest and surrender of offenders, but this arrangement did not extend to the hills overlooking Mymensingh. An attempt by the Susang Raja, a zamindar of Mymensingh, to levy rent in the hills led to a murderous raid in 1866, which was punished by an expedition..

Officer posted at Tura in 1867.

Government had by this time come to the conclusion that control from without would never really solve the Garo question. Hitherto it had been thought that it would be quite impossible for a European officer to exist in these malarious hills during the rainy season, but in 1866 it was decided that the experiment should be made, and in the following year Lieutenant Williamson was established on one of the spurs of Tura mountain.

The success which attended this experiment was remarkable. The Garos are naturally a cheerful, kindly race, who, when fairly treated, give no trouble, and between 1867 and 1871 nearly one hundred independent villages tendered their allegiance to the British Government.

Survey of Hills in 1870.

In 1870, when the survey of the Khasi Hills had nearly been completed, the survey party found itself at the north-east border of the Garo Hills, and it was decided to carry out a survey of that portion of the Garo territory which acknowledged British rule. The Deputy Commissioner, Captain Williamson, joined Major Austin, who was in charge of the survey party, and the two officers marched across the hills from Susang to Damra, and were thus the first Europeans to traverse the hills from Mymen-

singh to Goalpara. The only village to offer any opposition was Bangangiri, and this was overcome by the exercise of a little tact. The villagers dropped their hostile attitude, received the party, and finally tendered their submission and agreed to pay revenue to the British Government. Their example was then followed by many other independent villages.

In the following season work was again resumed till it was stopped by an unfortunate incident which occurred in March, 1871. It was necessary for the purposes of the survey to clear a station on the summit of the Mimanram mountain. Two coolies who, it is said, were unable to speak the Garo language, were deputed to collect labour from the villages of Pharamgiri and Rangmagiri which are situated near Mimanram. When they arrived at Rangmagiri they found a feast in progress, and were offered some liquor by the revellers. What happened then it is difficult to say, but it is obvious that a dispute can easily arise when one of the parties to it is half drunk, and neither side can properly understand the language of the other. The Garos threw themselves on the two coolies and attempted to make them prisoners. In the course of the struggle one of them succeeded in escaping, the other was murdered, and his head kept as a trophy.

The season was so far advanced that punitive measures were postponed till the following cold weather. The villages were visited by Captain La Touche, the officiating Deputy Commissioner, and as he was unable to arrest the murderers, a party of police was left

**Murder of
a coolie in
1871.**

**Punitive
measures.**

at Pharamgiri. In May, 1872, two of the men who were most responsible were brought in, and shortly afterwards an attack was made on the protected village of Damakchigiri by the independent villages of Kokwagiri and Bawigiri. An attack was also made on the outpost stationed at Pharamgiri. The Deputy Commissioner proceeded to this village, and occupied the villages of Kokwagiri and Bawigiri without difficulty, but Government had by this time come to the conclusion that it was no longer desirable to tolerate any so-called independent villages in the hills. The reasons which led the Lieutenant-Governor to submit proposals for their subjugation, and the steps taken to give effect to them, are thus summarised in the Bengal Report for 1872-73:

In consequence of outrages committed on our dependent villages by communities of independent Garos, the Lieutenant-Governor drew the attention of the Government of India to the absolute necessity which existed for thoroughly reclaiming that part of the Garo Hills which was still independent of control. It was stated that since the policy of direct management of the hill communities has been introduced in 1866, village after village had submitted to the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner in charge, voluntarily enrolling themselves as British subjects, and proving the genuineness of their action by regular payment of the trifling dues imposed on them. It was shown that a considerable portion of the hills had been thus brought within the pale of regular government. It was explained that the Lieutenant-Governor would have been quite content to wait for the gradual submission of the remaining independent Garos had they on their part been content to live at peace with their neighbours now under our protection; but they had chosen to commence active hostilities by raiding on dependent villages, and frequently gave protection to criminals who had offended against our laws. Conduct like this threatened disturbance, not only to the peace of the Garo district, but danger to the plains of Goalpara and Mymensingh, in which on more than

one recent occasion the Garo raids had caused considerable panic. The Lieutenant-Governor proposed, therefore, to put an end to the independence of the savages inhabiting this nook in the midst of British territory, bringing them under the direct control of the Deputy Commissioner, and opening paths through the centre of the hills along which our police would patrol.

The Lieutenant-Governor's proposals met with the approval of His Excellency the Governor-General in Council, and the necessary preparations for an expedition were at once taken in hand. The Lieutenant-Governor, after consulting with Colonel Haughton, the Commissioner, considered it expedient to allow no possible chance of miscarriage in such an enterprise; and provided for the collection of at least 500 armed police, supported on the side of the Khasi Hills by three companies of regular troops. It was also decided not to commence active operations till the middle of November, by which time it was hoped the country would become tolerably healthy for men from the plains.

The expeditionary force was divided into three columns. One column, under Captain Davis, entered the Hills from the Goalpara district on the north by the Nibari Duar; a second, under Mr. Daly, entered from the Mymensingh district, on the south; the third or main column, under Captain Williamson, the Deputy Commissioner, marched from Tura, the headquarters of the Garo Hills district. It was arranged that each column should follow a prescribed route through the independent tract, visiting and enforcing the submission of all villages on its way; and it was hoped that all would meet at a central rendezvous at about the same time. Lieutenant R. G. Woodthorpe, R. E., Assistant Superintendent of Survey, was deputed to conduct survey operations in communication with Captain Williamson.

The expedition was singularly successful. Captain Williamson occupied without opposition Dilmagiri, the leading independent village, which had been concerned in the recent raids, and received the submission of all the hamlets in the neighbourhood. Mr. Daly joined him on the 14th December, after repulsing, without loss of men on his side, an attack which the Garos made on his camp.* He, too, had received tenders of submission from most of the villages on his route. Establishing themselves at Rongrengiri, Captain Williamson and Mr. Daly, while waiting

* This was at Rongrengiri. The Garos were repulsed with some loss and after this one attack made no attempt anywhere to oppose the progress of the police.

for the arrival of the Northern column under Captain Davis, visited all the Garo villages within reach, and after receiving their offers of submission, arranged for the payment of the usual small house-tax, occasionally inflicting and realising fines where opposition had been offered or orders disobeyed, and insisting on the surrender of all skulls kept as trophies of raids.

Captain Davis's column was longer on the road, and did not join the others till the 2nd January. He had, however, visited all the independent villages on both sides of his line of march, and though he had been twice attacked, he had been able to repulse the Garos and punish the offending communities without much difficulty.

During January the remaining independent villages were visited, and submitted. The Garos, convinced apparently that resistance was hopeless, accepted the terms offered them by Captain Williamson, and, have under his directions, been engaged in opening out paths across the hills in several directions, which they will be required hereafter to maintain. The survey had also completed its duty and filled up the blank which has hitherto disfigured the maps.

**Subsequent
history un-
eventful.**

The subsequent history of the district is one of quiet though not of rapid progress. The Garos are some of the most peaceful of the hillmen in Assam, and quickly settled down under a rule which was both considerate and light. Such disturbances as have occurred were of a very trifling character. In 1882, eighteen villages near Randupara, who had been requisitioned for labour required for the construction of a road from Tura to Bangalkhata, refused to obey the orders of the Deputy Commissioner. Not content with staying away themselves they threatened with vengeance any village that turned out to work, and thus effectually put a stop to the operations. The Deputy Commissioner visited the place with a guard of 100 police, and, though several hundred Garos are said to have assembled with the

intention of opposing his advance, they dispersed on learning that he had gone by another route. Most of the villages visited were found quite empty, and, as the people declined to come in and deliver up their arms, two of the hamlets were burned. This step was followed by a complete surrender, and no further trouble was experienced.

In December 1902, the native Magistrate in charge of the Goalpara subdivision reported that a large number of Garos had assembled at the Dalgoma steamer-ghat with the object of establishing Garo rule. The Deputy Commissioner of Goalpara immediately proceeded to the spot with a strong body of police, but the Garos did not attempt to offer any resistance. It appeared that they had been misled by some designing men, who had collected large sums of money with the ostensible object of establishing some wholly shadowy and unsubstantial claims to the possession of the Habraghat pargana. Notices had been posted up warning the villagers not to pay rent to the Bijni zamindars, but on the arrest of the ringleaders, the crowd dispersed without more ado.

CHAPTER III. POPULATION.

Area and density—Villages—Tura—Growth of population—Immigration—Sex and civil condition—Infirmities—Language—Tribes—Religions—Occupations.

**Area and
density.**

The total area of the district is 3,140 square miles, the population in 1901 was 138,274, and the density was thus 44 to the square mile.

**Villages—
Tura.**

In 1901, the Garo Hills contained 1,026 villages including the small headquarters station of Tura. Tura is situated in 25°31' N. and 90°14' E., on a small plateau near the base of Tura hill. It is only 1,300 feet above the level of the sea, and immediately behind it Tura hill rises to an elevation of over 4,000 feet, its almost precipitous slopes clad in dense tropical forest. There are three small bungalows on the summit of this hill owned by Government and the missionaries, and the temperature there is generally about ten degrees lower than it is in the station below. Except on this side Tura is surrounded by low rolling hills, gradually declining in height till they reach the plains some twenty to twenty-five miles away. The station contains the bungalows of the few resident officials and of the missionaries, a small jail, the public offices, the lines of the military police, a market place, and a few shops, but it is nothing more than a village, and in 1901 only had a population of 1,375 souls. The place

is pretty enough, and on a clear day a magnificent view can be obtained from the station itself, and a still finer one from the summit of the hill under which it lies. But it is small, isolated, and is generally thought to be unhealthy. Attempts have recently been made to improve the sanitary conditions by cutting the jungle in the neighbourhood. A supply of excellent water is obtained from a hill stream which is distributed over the station by an aqueduct.

The Garo villages are generally built on the side of the hills, and are unfortified. They consist, in fact, of small hamlets, containing but a few houses, and in no district in the Province are the villages so small.

The abstract in the margin shows the population recorded at each census and the percentage variation. Growth of the population.

Population.	Percentage variation.	In 1872 and 1881 it was impossible to carry out a regular enumeration in the hills, and only a rough estimate was formed.
1872 100,780		
1881 109,548	+ 8.7	
1891 121,570	+ 10.9	
1901 138,274	+ 13.7	

The district suffered severely from *kala azar* between 1881 and 1891, and it is possible that the earlier estimates were too low. Part of the increase in 1901 was attributed to imperfections in the preceding census in the plains mauzas, and the actual increase in the indigenous population was thought to be about 10 per cent.

In 1901, 90 per cent of the population enumerated in the district were natives of the Garo Hills, 6 per cent Immigration.

had been born in other districts of the Province, and 4 per cent were foreigners who had been born outside Assam. Almost all of the immigrants from other districts in the Province were natives of Goalpara, and had, no doubt, merely moved across the frontier. There is an appreciable movement back from the Garo Hills district into Goalpara, but for every person who moves into Goalpara there are four who go the other way. The bulk of the foreigners come from Rangpur and Mymensingh, two neighbouring districts of Bengal, but there are also a certain number of Nepalese.

**Sex and civil
condition.**

In the district as a whole there is a considerable deficiency of women, and in 1901 there were only 974 women to every 1,000 men. The deficiency is entirely due to the immigrant population. Amongst those born and censused in the district the proportion of the sexes was exactly equal, and amongst the Garos the women very slightly exceeded the men in numbers.

The Garos are not exclusive in matters matrimonial, and will intermarry with any person except Jugis or sweepers. Owing to the conditions under which they live, mixed marriages are, however, far from common. The proposal comes from the family of the bride, and though his parents' consent must be, of course, obtained, the wishes of the person most concerned are sometimes not consulted. Amongst the Abengs there is a very curious custom. It is considered good form for the youth selected to run away when asked to marry a girl. This

most uncomplimentary conduct must not be taken to imply that he is in any way averse from the proposal, and cases have been known in which the fugitive has sued his father-in-law elect because he let him go and gave his daughter to another man. The essential portions of the ceremony are an address from the priest and the slaughter of a cock and hen. Divorce is recognized, and widows are allowed to marry, but are expected to do so in their husband's family. Polygamy is permitted, provided that the consent of the first wife is obtained. In 1901, out of 29,000 animistic married women, nearly 2,300 were less than 15 years of age. Inheritance goes through the female, and property frequently passes through the daughter to the son-in-law. Where this is the case he is compelled to marry his mother-in-law, if she is still alive, and a man not unfrequently occupies the position of husband towards mother and daughter at the same time. When a woman dies, the family property passes to her youngest, or occasionally to her eldest, daughter. The husband is, however, allowed to retain possession of the estate if he can succeed in obtaining one of his first wife's family as his second spouse. In spite of the liberal exposure of their persons, the women are chaste and make good and steady wives, and, as far as the orthodox standards of sexual morality are concerned, compare most favourably with the Khasi women, their neighbours on the east, who swathe themselves in a multitude of garments. More detailed information with regard to the marriage customs of the Garos will be found in the monograph on that tribe by Captain Playfair.

Infirmities.

From the abstract in the margin it will be seen that the district is below the average for the Province with regard to three out of the four infirmities selected for record at the census.

Out of 10,000 males, number afflicted with—	Garó Hills.	Assam.	India.
Insanity ...	4	5	3
Deaf-mutism	8	9	6
Blindness ...	14	10	12
Leprosy ...	9	13	5

Blindness, as in all the hill districts, is unusually common, and women suffer from it even more than men. It is possible that the fires which are kept smouldering in a hill-man's hut have a prejudicial effect upon the eyesight.

Language.

Seventy-seven per cent of the population in 1901 returned Garó as their customary form of speech, 13 per cent Bengali, nearly 5 per cent Rabha, and over 2 per cent Koch, another language belonging, like Garó and Rabha, to the Bodo family. There are at least twelve different dialects of Garó, but many differ so little from the standard Awe that for all practical purposes they can be disregarded. The following are the principal varieties in use : (1) Awe, which is spoken by the inhabitants of the northern and north-eastern hills, north of the central range, as far west as the Jinari river. (2) Abeng, which is spoken in the rest of the north, in the west, and in the south as far east as the Bhugai river. (3) Chibok, which is spoken in the uplands under the central range from the Bhugai almost as far east as the Someswari. (4) Ruga, which is used in the country south of the Chibok area in the lower valley of the Bhugai. (5) Dual, which is spoken in the lower Nitai valley. (6) Atong, which is used in the lower Someswari valley right up to the borders of the Khasi Hills. Rabha has two dialects

Rangdania and Maitaria, but it is not a language of which much is known. Little also is known of Koch, but such information as exists will be found, with descriptions of Rabha and Garo, in Vol. III, Part II, of the Linguistic Survey of India by Doctor Grierson.

Judged by the standard of language, which in this **Tribes.** case is more reliable than the caste returns, as many of the native Christians are Garos, 77 per cent of the population of the district are members of the Garo tribe. Other tribes, all of which are members of the great Bodo family to which the Garos belong, are the Rabhas, Haijongs, and Koches, who amounted altogether to nearly 13 per cent of the total population. The manners and customs of the Garos are described at length in the monograph on the tribe which is now under preparation by Captain Playfair, and are referred to incidentally in the following pages.

The Haijong language is akin to Bengali, but **Haijong.** the tribe, according to their own legends, originally came from the Himalaya. The Haijongs call themselves Hindus, and their houses and style of dress resemble those of the ordinary plainsmen, but they will still eat pig, though they draw the line at fowls, beef, and snakes. They are divided into several endogamous groups, such as the Harong pariya, Bhojni pariya, Manik kuriya, Tepar pariya, Sutadal, and Mauji pariya, and at their marriage ceremonies a priest attends and kindles the sacred fire of mango wood. They worship Durga and Kali and perform the *sradh* ceremony.

Males	...	2,720
Females	...	2,538

Kochs.

The Koches are divided into three main endogamous divisions, the Dasgaiya, the Hari-gaiya, and the Anang.

Males	...	2,123
Females	...	2,210

The Dasgaiya Koches eat pig but refuse fowls, the last two subdivisions eat fowls as well as pig, but all refuse beef, snakes, and the flesh of wild animals other than deer. The houses of the Koches are built in the style of the ordinary plainsman's hut, and the men wear the *dhoti* and wrap of the Assam Valley. The women wear a smock reaching from the bust to the knees, with the exception of the Anangs, who wear a petticoat, a shawl over the trunk, and another piece of cloth round the head. The Koches worship Kali and Durga, but have no regular priest. The principal part of the wedding ceremony is a feast, and the Harigaiya and Anang Koches follow the Garo ritual and kill fowls and examine their entrails to see whether the omens are favourable.

Rabhas.

The Rabhas are a section of the Bodo race and appear to be an offshoot of the Garos. Their language is closely akin to Garo, and their original habitat seems to have been the northern slopes of the Garo Hills. Certain sections of the tribe which live on the borders of that district have no word for north and south but describe the former idea by Bhutan, the latter by Tura, a fact which pretty clearly indicates the locality from which they originally came. Most of the Rabhas have, however, left their ancestral home and settled in Darrang, Kamrup, and Goalpara. In the last named district the bulk of the tribe are to be found south of the Brahmaputra.

Males	...	3,863
Females	...	3,886

The Rabhas are divided into the following seven sections—Rangdania, Pati, Maitariya, Koch, Batlia, Dahuria, and Sangha. The Rangdania lay claim to a position of superiority, but intermarriage is allowed with the Patis and Maitariyas. Intermarriage between the first three sections and the lower subdivisions of the caste is permitted, but only on payment of a fine of about Rs. 100. The Rabhas look down upon the Garos and in their turn are treated as inferiors by the Mech. Like the other animistic tribes, they are fond of beer, pork, and chicken, but they abstain from beef. Their villages are not unlike those of the Mech, they have gardens and fruit trees, but pigs and fowls do much damage, and the homestead is very different from the green dankery of bamboos, fruit trees, and vegetables which surrounds the houses of the Assamese. Agriculture is their usual occupation and rice the staple crop grown. What money they require is usually obtained by the sale of surplus produce or work in the forests of the district.

Adult marriage is in vogue, and wives in the Garo Hills are said to be extremely cheap. As a rule they can be had for nothing, and it is only occasionally that the lover has to pay thirty or forty rupees for the object of his affections. Vermillion is smeared on the bride's forehead, a practice which does not obtain among most of the aboriginal tribes, but the essential part of the ceremony is the killing of two fowls and the feasting of the villagers. The Pati Rabhas go further than this, and model their procedure as closely as possible on the Hindu ceremony. The dead, too, are generally burned, unless an

epidemic is in progress, when it is thought that the infection might be conveyed in the smoke of the funeral pyre. Their chief god is called Rishi, and is represented by a pot of rice on a bamboo platform, to which offerings of fowls and pigs are made. After death their souls are said to be absorbed into Rishi, a Buddhistic form of doctrine, but their views on the subject, like those of other animistic tribes, are probably extremely vague.

Religion.

The Garos appear to believe in a supreme deity and in a future life, but, as is usual in the hills, the bulk of their religious activities are devoted to the propitiation of evil spirits, who are supposed to be the cause of the misfortunes that befall them. The following is an accurate description of a Garo sacrifice:—"The priest squatted before a curious flat shield of split bamboo and cane, and muttered strangely to himself, as though under the influence of some drug. A villager kept dragging a kid in a circle round and round the priest and his curious god, and each time as it passed the priest dabbed it on the head with a little flour and water. Finally a little of the mixture was forced into its mouth and it was summarily beheaded. The blood was allowed to pour upon a plate of rice, which, with the tail, was offered to the deity. The rest of the animal went to form part of the feast." For further details with regard to the religion of the people reference should be made to the monograph on the Garo tribe.

Christianity. The American Baptist Mission first opened a branch at Tura in 1877, though missionaries had been sent to Goalpara town to labour amongst the Garos in 1867, and

two Garos had been baptised in Gauhati in 1864. The efforts of the missionaries have been rewarded with a fair measure of success. In 1881, there were 656 Native Christians in the hills, in 1891, there were 1,154, and by 1901 the number had risen to 3,629, the immense majority of whom were Baptists. There were in that year seven missionaries residing in Tura, four of whom were ladies. The missionaries encourage a certain degree of independence amongst their followers, and to a great extent leave the management of the various communities to the native elders. One of the most prosperous Christian villages is situated just across the border of the district near Damra in Goalpara.

Statistics for the religions which had a considerable number of adherents will be found in Table III. "Others" are represented by 3 Jains, who were Marwari shop-keepers, and 272 Buddhists, nearly all of whom were Nepalese.

For all practical purposes the occupations of the inhabitants of the Garo Hills begin and end with agriculture. Agriculture was returned as the principal means of livelihood of nearly 96 per cent of the population in 1901, and even those who returned some other avocation on the census schedules were generally dependant on agriculture for their support to a greater or less degree. Reference will be made in a subsequent chapter to such industries as are in existence in the hills. **Occupations.**

CHAPTER IV.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE PEOPLE.

Agriculture—Live stock—Forests—Industries—Wages—Prices—
Food—Dress—Dwellings—Prosperity of the people—Trade—
Communications—List of important forest reserves.

Agriculture.
General
conditions.

In the hills the Garos cultivate their land on the system known as *jhum*. A spot of land is selected on the hill side, and the jungle cut down during the cold season. Towards the end of March, the trees and brushwood are burned as they lie, and the rice crop is planted in April at the commencement of the rains. Shortly afterwards, the seeds of vegetables, cotton, pepper, and pulses are sown in the same clearing ; and each crop is reaped in rotation as it comes to maturity. The Abengs are, however, the only section of the tribe who sow rice in the first year that the *jhum* is cleared. The other sections begin with a miscellaneous crop. Miscellaneous crops include different kinds of yams, arhar (*cajanus indicus*), which is reared as food for the lac insect, ginger, indigo, and turmeric. In the second year, rice only is grown ; and after two years' cultivation the clearing is abandoned and suffered to lie fallow for about ten years. Neither plough nor spade is used except in the few Hinduized villages bordering on the plains. The sole implements of agriculture are a short *dao* fixed in a long handle with which the Garos clear the jungle, and a

small hoe. The cotton is short in staple and poor in quality, but contains a small proportion of seed and has been found suited for mixing with woollen fabrics.

A more detailed account of the system of agriculture practised by the Garos will be found in the monograph by Captain Playfair.

The system of cultivation followed in the plains ^{The plains} mauzas resembles in all essential details the system that prevails in the neighbouring district of Goalpara. The plough is used, and the staple crop is rice. Mustard and jute are grown for export, and tobacco is a common garden crop. Figures showing the area under different staples in the plains mauzas will be found in Table V.

The live stock of the district include buffaloes, cattle, ^{Live stock.} goats, pigs, and poultry. Buffaloes are generally kept by Nepalese, and cost about Rs. 15 for a bull calf and Rs. 45 for a cow. The cattle are neither worked nor milked, and are in consequence sturdy little animals. In the front room of many Garo houses will be seen a fat well favoured beast, which is being kept to serve as the *piece de resistance* at the next funeral feast. Bullocks and cows usually cost about Rs. 20 each. Goats are used for food and sacrifice, pigs are of the ordinary black variety.

In 1904, there were 18 reserved forests in the Garo ^{Forests.} Hills, and they covered altogether an area of 139 square miles. The majority of these reserves are small patches of land, not more than one or two square miles in area, which bear sal (*shorea robusta*) or other valuable kinds

of timber trees. The receipts obtained from each reserved forest in 1900-01 and subsequent years will be found in Table VI. Further details with regard to the six reserves that are ten square miles or more in area are appended to this chapter.

The most valuable forests in the district are the sal forests along the northern border. There are patches of sal in the interior intermixed with other trees such as sam (*artocarpus chaplasha*), ajhar (*lagerstræmia flos reginæ*), poma (*cedrela toona*), paroli (*stereospermum chelonoides*), sida (*lagerstræmia parviflora*) and gomari (*gmelina arborea*), but a considerable portion of the hills has been cleared at one time or another for the shifting cultivation of the Garos, and land which has once been *jhumed* produces little but bamboo and low scrub jungle. In a subsequent chapter it will be shown that on the northern and western frontier of the district a belt of land, a large part of which is covered with forest and jungle, is owned by the Mechpara, Karaibari, and Bijni zamindars. Except in the case of what is known as the Mechpara B mahal, the forests on this land are managed by Government, who retain 25 per cent of the total collections. The Mechpara B mahal is managed by the zamindars, and Government only receives 15 per cent of the gross revenue.

Forest administration and trade.

The district is divided into four ranges with headquarters at Damra, Phulbari, Mahendraganj, and Baghmara. Forest produce is, as a rule, brought down the rivers, and there are accordingly four check stations; one

at Dekachang for the Krishnai river, one at Nibari for the Jinari river, one at Manikarchar for the Kalu river, and one at Dalu for the Bhugai river. Any person who pays house tax or land revenue in the district can remove any timber and other forest produce which he requires for his own use, free of charge. If he wishes to trade in small unreserved trees and unimportant minor forest products he takes out what is known as a *gurkati* permit, for which he pays one rupee. Foreigners pay three rupees for these *gurkati* permits. Sal, sam, and ajhar, and, in the Someswari valley, nahor and poma are the trees in which the biggest trade is done. They are cut up into *dhums*, or logs about seven or eight feet long, which are used for boat building, or into *gools*, or logs from fifteen to twenty feet in length. These logs are made up into rafts, which are attached to dug-out canoes, and floated down the rivers in August and September to depôts at Marnai, Dubapara, Nagarbera, Dalu, Ghoshgaon, and Baghmara, where they are purchased by traders from Bengal. There is also a considerable trade in canoes which are hollowed out of *titasapa* (*michelia champaca*), *koroi* (*albizzia procera*), *gomari* (*gmelina arborea*), jam and ajhar. Royalty is levied in the case of sal or sam at the rate of 6 annas a cubic foot, subject to a maximum of Rs. 10 per tree. For other reserved trees,* the rate is 4 annas a cubic foot subject to a maximum of Rs. 6.

The forest receipts and expenditure in 1900-01 and subsequent years will be found in Table VII. The receipts

* A list of reserved trees will be found on page 44 of the Assam Forest Manual.

from each of the reserves will be found in Table VI, and it will be seen that, as a rule, they contribute only a small portion of the revenue. In 1902-03, out of a total forest revenue of Rs. 81,000, only Rs. 6,000 were realized from the reserves. A royalty of Rs. 2 per maund is levied on all lac collected from unclassified state forests, and the receipts under this head often amount to a considerable sum. The Dambu reserve, which is situated on the border of the Khasi Hills, contains a fine growth of sal. On three occasions leases of this forest have been given on favourable terms to timber traders, but on each occasion the concession was resigned, as it was found impossible to work it at a profit. The receipts from the forests of the Garo Hills will probably increase as time goes on. The populous district of Mymensingh, lying immediately to the south, is largely dependent on the hills for its supply of timber, and the private forests in Goalpara have been reduced by overfelling. There are good waterways around the base of the hills, and the rivers are fit for the transport of timber for a distance of from ten to fifteen miles within the hills themselves.

Lac.

Most of the lac produced in the Garo Hills is reared on the arhar plant (*cajanus indicus*), which is grown for this purpose in the *jhums*, though the insects are sometimes placed on different varieties of the *ficus* in the jungle. As far as is known the quality of the product is not affected by the tree on which the insect has been fed. The method of propagation is as follows:—Pieces of stick lac containing living insects are placed in baskets and tied on to the twigs of the tree on which the next

crop is to be grown. After a few days the insects crawl on to the young branches and begin to feed and secrete the resin. They are left undisturbed for about six months and the twigs encrusted with the secretion are then picked off. Ants and the caterpillars of a small moth sometimes do much damage to the insect, and a heavy storm at the time when they are spreading over the tree will destroy them altogether. Cultivated lac is only reared in a narrow belt of country along the north of the district between Phulbari and the border of Kamrup. The Garos think that it would be unlucky to rear lac in any other portion of the district, though small quantities are occasionally collected from the jungle. The lac is exported in the crude form of stick lac. The principal centres of the industry are in the neighbourhood of Nibari and Damra.

The local industries are of no importance. The Garo **Industries.** women weave a coarse cotton cloth for the scanty garments of themselves and the men, and bamboo mats and baskets are also made for sale. Rude pottery is made in certain villages, but nearly all the metal utensils are imported.

There is no labouring class in the district, and conse- **Wages.** quently no market rate of wages, though the village headmen occasionally give advances to their poorer neighbours, and by this means induce them to come and work for them as servants. Labour is required for getting in the harvest, but this is provided by a system of mutual assistance, the villagers helping one another and receiving help in their turn. Porters and coolies working

on the roads receive four annas a day, but they cannot be obtained without the intervention of the local officers.

Prices.

Table VIII shows the price of common rice, salt, and matikalai at Tura in 1880, 1890, 1900, and subsequent years. The price of rice fluctuates considerably from year to year, but as each household generally grows enough for its own consumption, and no more, variations in the price have little effect upon the district as a whole. The price of salt has fallen considerably since 1903.

Food.

The staple food of the Garos is rice, but their dietary is much more varied than that of the people of the plains, and, in addition to rice, they grow in their *jhums* yams, beans, millet, maize, and chillies. They also eat the flesh of almost any animal, domesticated or wild, which they can get. Dog is esteemed a luxury. Milk, like other hill tribes, they eschew. This aversion of the inhabitants of Assam to milk is referred to by the historian of Mir Jumla's invasion in the seventeenth century, and the description given of these people then would apply to the Garos at the present day. "They eat whatever they get, and from whomsoever it be, following the bent of their uncivilized minds. They will accept food from Muhammadans and other people; they will eat every kind of flesh except human, whether of dead or killed animals. They taboo butter, so much so that they will refuse food if it only smells of butter."*

Dress.

The Garo costume is as scanty as is compatible with decency. The men wear a narrow cloth, which is passed between the legs and fastened round the waist, and which

* J. A. S. B. Vol. LXI., Part I, No. 1, page 80.

does not really effectually cover the part it is intended to conceal. The woman's cloth, which is only about fourteen inches broad, is fastened round the body below the navel, the two top corners meeting over the thigh; the bottom corners are left unfastened, as otherwise the petticoat would be too tight for comfort. The women load their ears with masses of brass earrings, and individuals have been seen with more than 60 brass rings, each $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference, and weighing altogether just under 2 lbs., in the lobe of a single ear. The lobe, though enormously distended, was not broken; but the weight of the rings was to a great extent supported by a string passed over the head. The weapons of the hill men consist of spear, sword, and shield. The sword, which is peculiar to these hills, is a two-edged instrument, the blade and handle forming one piece. The shield is composed of thin strips of bamboo woven together so as to be almost proof against a spear thrust; or sometimes of bear skin stretched on a bamboo frame. Garos wear turbans wound tightly round the top of the head so as to keep the hair erect. The actual crown of the head is, however, bare. The other inhabitants of the district wear the usual costume of the Assamese, i.e., a waist cloth and shawl, with occasionally a cotton coat for the men, and a petticoat and shawl for the women.

The Hindus and Muhammadans live in small huts ^{Dwellings.} surrounding a neat courtyard, which do not differ in any way from the houses of the plains. Bamboo is the staple article used in the construction of the ordinary Garo house. The front room is on a level with the

ground, but as the houses are often from 80 to 100 feet in length and are built on the side of a hill, a considerable portion of the structure has of necessity to be raised on posts. The interior is divided into several compartments, but light and ventilation are alike lacking. There are generally one or more verandahs at the side or end, and in front two wooden posts are erected in memory of each dead member of the family. Before some houses there will be seen a regular sheaf of thirty or forty posts, some of which are roughly carved into the effigy of the human form and dressed in the clothes of the deceased. The horns of all cattle killed are also kept in the front verandah, as an abiding testimony to the wealth and liberality of the family.

**Prosperity
of people.**

The Deputy Commissioner (Captain Playfair) is of opinion that, in comparison with the people of the plains, the Garos are extremely prosperous. Food of all kinds is readily obtainable, for their fields produce yams, beans, rice, maize, and chillies, and with such a miscellaneous crop it is very seldom that a complete failure of the harvest can occur. The people live in comfortable houses and feed well. Money is comparatively plentiful and high prices are paid for the Garo's greatest treasure, the *khora* or metal gong which they call *rang*. The intrinsic value of these articles must be very small, but old *khoras* often change hands at purely fancy prices. Bong Lashkar, for instance, realizing that with the advance of civilization the value of these articles was bound to fall, sold a collection of 60 for no less than Rs. 3,000; a large sum to realize from a community of semi-savages

for objects which are, after all, of no material value. Cotton, lac, and timber bring a considerable amount of money into the district, and the aversion which even the poorest of the Garos have to working for hire, indicates a complete absence of anything ordinarily known as poverty.

The following description of these *khoras* is taken from the Report on the general administration of the district in 1886-87 :—

The trade in these "khoras" is a curious one. They are used chiefly as gongs, beaten at all their feasts whether on occasions of joy or sorrow. The people dance and sing to their music, their accumulation is the aim of every Garo's life, and their possession is a badge of respectability and position. They are a standard token of exchange throughout the district, they are precious heirlooms handed down from generation to generation. What old china is to the art collector, an old "khora" or rang is to the Garo, as in numismatics so it is for them as regards khoras, "it is the rust they value, not the gold." These khoras are even now made in Goalpara and Mymensingh and are sold according to the weight of metal. Rs. 8 would be a good price for a modern one, but an old one, whose intrinsic value might have been when new Rs. 5, will exchange for sums up to Rs. 250. The fortunate possessors of these old khoras are well known, and could always get full exchange value for them. The marks and signs on khoras of different generations are recognized by large numbers of the skilled. It has, however, been a marvel to me that the artificial demand has not produced spurious articles in greater quantities. One well known Garo told me without shame, indeed with pride, and told me in the presence of many other Garos, that he had some few years ago got khoras made in Goalpara on the pattern of an old one he had, that these new ones cost him Rs. 6 each, that he buried them in the ground for some months with salt, and then took them out converted in appearance into khoras many generations old, so old as to deceive the best judges, and so valuable as to have brought him nearly Rs. 100 each.

Trade.

The principal articles of export from the hills are timber, chillies, lac, and cotton. From the last two staples the Garos derive considerable profit, but there is little trade except in these four commodities, and in mustard and jute which are grown for export in the plains mauzas. In bad seasons a certain quantity of rice is imported into the hills from the district of Mymensingh, but the Garos are not a people of numerous or varied wants and satisfy most of their requirements from the produce of their farms. Other articles of import are salt, dried fish, live stock, and the brass earrings which are so dear to the heart of the Garo belle. Most of the trade of the district is conducted at the various markets, a list of which will be found in the Appendix. The only places in which there are any permanent shops are Tura, Baghmara, Cheran, Dekachang, Phulbari, and Mahendraganj, and at none of these places except Tura are there more than three or four.

Communications.

Communications, as is only natural in a sparsely populated, jungle-covered, and hilly country, are not particularly good. Tura is generally visited from the Rohmari steamer ghat, which lies from 35 to 40 miles to the east of it in the district of Rangpur. In the winter time there is often a tedious and difficult march of five miles across sandy *churs* from the steamer ghat to the inspection bungalow. There is no receiving flat, no floating dak bungalow, nothing but a few grass huts, occupied by steamer clerks and coolies, in the middle of this sandy waste.

The steamers often arrive late at night, and as there are broad backwaters to be crossed before the main bank is reached, the traveller starts upon his journey under most unfavourable conditions. The position of the ghat shifts, moreover, from season to season, and it is difficult for the casual visiter to estimate the exact degree of inconvenience that he is likely to experience, but that it will be very considerable he may feel quite sure.

From Rohmari a cart road runs past Manikarchar to Tura, 35 miles away. There are inspection bungalows at the following places. The figure in brackets represents the length of the stage in miles :—Rangapani ($6\frac{1}{2}$), Garobadha (9), Damalgiri ($8\frac{1}{2}$), Tura (11). The road is unmetalled, but the gradients are very easy, and the total length can be considerably reduced by in places following a bridle path. Another cart road runs from Tura to Dalu on the southern frontier of the district. The total length is $33\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and there are inspection bungalows at Adugiri ($10\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Kirapara ($9\frac{1}{4}$ miles), and Barengapara or Dalu ($11\frac{1}{2}$ miles). There are two bridle paths from Tura, one to Phulbari and one to Bangshi, and thence on to Damra. The former is 38 miles in length, and has inspection bungalows at Sugiri ($11\frac{3}{4}$), Sampalgiri ($9\frac{1}{4}$), Rongmachakgiri ($9\frac{1}{2}$), and Phulbari ($7\frac{1}{2}$). The latter is $72\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length and has inspection bungalows at Duragiri (8), Arbela (6), Megapgiri (13), Rongrengiri ($8\frac{1}{2}$), Songsak ($10\frac{1}{2}$), Cheran ($10\frac{1}{2}$),

Bangshi (10) and Damra (7). There is also a cold weather track from Manikarchar to Bahadurkata hat, a total distance of 22 miles. There are inspection bungalows at Kalaichar ($8\frac{1}{2}$) and Mahendraganj ($10\frac{1}{2}$). Off the cart road the only means of baggage transport are elephants and porters. The Garos carry their loads on their back, supported in that position by a band round the head.

The following statement shows in a condensed form the extent to which the rivers are navigable in the rains. The dug-out canoe is the vessel ordinarily employed, and except to a partial degree on the Someswari and Krishnai the rivers are not navigable even by them in the cold weather :--

Name of river.	Point to which navigable.
Ajagar.	Abhirampara.
Bhugai.	Selbulgiri.
Dudhnai.	Dhepa hat.
Ghagoan.	Khanchonkona.
Jinari.	Bajengdoba.
Kalu.	Garobadha.
Kolonkini.	Rajabala.
Krishnai.	Dekachang hat.
Lokai.	Dhoromchash.

Name of river.	Point to which navigable.
Nitai.	Chakpatgiri hat.
Rongai.	Bangalkata.
Someswari.	Siju, and above the rapids as far as Rongrengiri.

There are no telegraph offices in the district and only one post office, which is situated at Tura.

Brief Description of reserves not less than 10 Sq. miles in area.

Name.	Situation and character of soil.	Area in square miles.	Date when constituted.	Names of valuable timber trees found in any considerable number in the forest.	Routes by which timber is or could be extracted and centres to which it would be taken.
Rongrengiri	Situated in mauza No. 5 in the centre of the hills. The reserve is a series of plateaux and small hillocks. The surface soil is good throughout. The under-lying rocks consist of gneiss and mica schists and quartzite rocks and dykes of trap, also sandstone strata containing several out-crops of lime and coal.	14	23rd June 1883.	Sal covers almost two-thirds of the area, in places densely, elsewhere thin and scattered. There are a few makai and paroli trees, but generally speaking there is no other timber but sal.	The only route by which timber from this reserve could be taken is down the Komswari river if the river can be cleared at a considerable cost, to Baghmara.
Songsak ...	Situated in mauza No. 4 in the midst of the hills about 10 miles south-east of the Rongrengiri reserve. The soil is rich though immense boulders of gneiss occupy a considerable portion.	14	3rd. October 1885.	Almost one-half of the reserve is occupied more or less densely by sal. There is little else but sal and scrub in the reserve, but among the latter there are a few paroli, gomari and makai trees.	Timber from this reserve can be extracted along the Rongri Nadi to Rongrengiri hat and thence by the Krishnai river to Marnai Depôt.
Chima-Bang-is.	Situated in mauza No. 4. The reserve comprises the first range of hills and the level	15	23rd June 1883,	The reserves contain a fair amount of sal in scattered and irregular	Timber can be taken to Marnai, Dubapara, Goalpara, Dhubri and Lower

	portion of the valleys on the west bank of the Dudhnai river. The rock is composed of gneiss and mica schists and quartzites. The level land in the valley consists of the wash from the adjoining hills.			blocks, but little other timber of any value. Sida, paroli, and karai trees are found in small numbers.	Bengal, by the Dudhnai and Brahmaputra rivers.
Jinari ...	Situated in mauza No. 3 close to the Goalpara boundary. There are two ranges of hills intersected by the valley of the Jinari, they consist of gneiss and quartzite rock. The valley is sandy loam.	10	23rd June 1883.	There is very little sal in this reserve, but a fair number of gomari, ajbar, paroli, poma and sida.	The Jinari and Brahmaputra rivers are the lines of export; by the former timber could be brought to Dubapara and Marnai and by the latter to Bengal.
Angratoli ...	Situated in mauza No. 1 on the border of the Mymensingh district. Comprises a range of low hills with a small area of plain land adjoining the Mymensingh district. The soil is rich.	17	28th January 1888.	Besides sal, which occupies nearly half of the reserve, karai is very abundant. Gomari and makai are also found.	Timber can be taken down the Buraghat river to the Mymensingh markets.
Baghmara...	Situated in mauza No. 1 on the Someswari river on the border of the Mymensingh district. The reserve is a series of hills and the soil, which is very shallow and poor, approaches clay in places. great boulders of sand-stone and conglomerate being exhibited on the surface.	19	26th February 1887.	There are narrow clumps of sal poles on the hills on the bank of Someswari. A few karai and rongi trees are found in this reserve.	The Someswari river which forms the western boundary of the reserve is navigable throughout the year, and timber can be floated by it to Baghmara and Mymensingh.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Land settlement in the plains mauzas—Assessment in the hills—Revenue collections—Excise—Income tax and stamps—Public works—Government—Police and jails—Education—Medical.

**Land
Revenue.**

For revenue purposes the district is divided into two distinct areas, the hills mauzas, (mauzas I to IV), and a narrow strip of country consisting of lelland interspersed with low hills, on the northern, western, and southern frontiers of the district. This strip of country is nowhere more than six miles in breadth, and the average width probably does not exceed two miles. The form of revenue assessed in the hills is house tax, in the plains land tax, but before discussing the different tenures in force, reference must be made to the disputes that have arisen in connection with the boundary of the Garo Hills.

**Disputes
over
northern
boundary
of Garo
Hills.**

In the chapter on the history of the district it has been shown that the Bengali zamindars endeavoured to levy imposts on the hillmen and to bring them under their authority. Between 1849 and 1854 the southern boundary of the Goalpara district was laid down by the revenue survey under Mr. Kelso, and for some years this line was accepted as the northern boundary of the district of the Garo Hills. The zamindars of the estates along the frontier still at that time laid claim to the

right to levy tribute and cesses from the Garos. In 1869, Act XXII was passed to authorise the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to extinguish these rights on payment of compensation to the border landlords. With this object in view a boundary was laid down by Mr. Beckett, an officer duly authorised for the purpose, in 1873. Mr. Beckett, for reasons which are not quite clear, did not invariably follow Mr. Kelso's boundary. In places he carried his line considerably further north, and excluded from the district of Goalpara blocks of land, one or two of which covered an area of as much as six or seven square miles. Maps showing Beckett's and Kelso's boundaries will be found in R. A. Progs., June 1903, Nos. 53-114, and R. A. Progs., April 1902, Nos. 1-97.

The zamindars naturally objected to the summary extinction of the rights they had formerly exercised over the land lying north of Kelso's and south of Beckett's boundary, and instituted civil suits against the Government. On examination it was found that these cases could not equitably be defended, and compromises were concluded with the zamindars. The whole of the land claimed by the Ghurlla or Gauripur zamindar was resigned by him in perpetuity, in consideration of the receipt of an annuity of Rs. 7,164. The rights of the Mechpara zamindars south of Kelso's boundary were extinguished in consideration of the payment of Rs. 14,700. With regard to the land lying between Beckett's and Kelso's boundaries, the Mechpara zamindars were allowed to continue to be in

Compromise
with zamindars in
1873.

management of the B villages, *i.e.*, the villages situated in the plains which had all along been managed by them and treated by them as part of their permanently settled estates. They were, however, bound to collect "all rent and profits" only at the rates fixed by the Deputy Commissioner of the Garo Hills, and were required to pay Government 15 per cent of the gross collections, as some return on expenditure incurred by the state in keeping the peace on a frontier which had previously been in a very disturbed condition. In the A villages, the villages inhabited by Garos, the management and collection of the revenue was made over to the Garo Hills authorities, but 75 per cent of the gross receipts were handed to the zamindars. Terms similar to those laid down for the Mechpara A villages were accepted by the Bijni zamindar, an offer of a lump sum of Rs. 840 in extinction of all his rights and interests having been refused. The rights claimed by the Karaibari zamindars in land lying south of the Kelso boundary were extinguished on payment of an annuity of Rs. 4,975, and the management of the villages between Beckett's and Kelso's line was handed over to Government, on the usual terms that 75 per cent of the gross collections should be made over to the zamindars.*

On the conclusion of these agreements Regulation I of 1878 was passed which declared Beckett's line to be the legal boundary of the Garo Hills. All rights of the

* *Vide* letter No 2063, dated 9-11-1878 from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam to the Secretary to the Government of India, Home Dept., File No. 63 J. of 1878, General Department.

zamindars within the Garo Hills were thus extinguished except to such extent as they were recognised by the agreements.

No attempt was made to survey or demarcate the land which had been transferred from the Habraghat pargana of the Bijni estate to the Garo Hills. It was known that Bijni were entitled to 75 per cent of the gross receipts from certain lands which had formed the subject matter of compromise in 1878, but no one seems to have known exactly where these lands were situated. There were no maps or boundary marks and the Deputy Commissioner appears to have assumed that what was really the Bijni A *mahal* was *khas* land at the disposal of Government. The revenue of a portion of the estate was entirely appropriated by Government from 1880-81 onwards, while in another portion half the revenue was credited to Government and half to certain Garo *lashkars* between 1880-81 and 1886-87. In 1887, the Deputy Commissioner came to the conclusion that the *lashkars* were not entitled to any portion of the revenue, and the whole of it was absorbed by Government. The managers of the Bijni estate were, however, dissatisfied with the small pittances which had from time to time been doled out to them. They pointed out that the profits of the land which had been excluded from the Habraghat pargana by Beckett's line, must have exceeded the trifling sums they had at long intervals received, and applied for a survey. Their request was granted in 1899. The survey disclosed that land which had for years been treated as

Bijni A
Mahal
wrongly
treated as
khas naza-
rana.

khas was in reality part of the Bijni A *mahal*, and in 1902, Government refunded to the Bijni estate Rs. 24,967 which appeared to be due on account of arrears of mesne profits.*

The nazarana land.

In addition to the land lying between Beckett's and Kelso's boundaries there are strips of level land lying between Kelso's line and the foot of the hills, which are known as the *nazarana mahals* and form part of the plains mauzas of the Garo Hills. These strips have never been surveyed, but they are said to be about twenty-five miles long and from one to five miles in breadth. The total area of these so-called *nazarana* lands between Beckett's and Kelso's boundary lines, which form the Bijni A *mahal*, is 37,500 *bighas*, and the settled area in 1900-01 was 2,600 *bighas*. The cultivated area in the *nazarana mahals* south of Kelso's line was 4,800 *bighas*. The population of this tract in 1901 was 5,370, seven-elevenths of whom were Garos. A report on these *nazarana* lands was submitted by the Deputy Commissioner on February 12th, 1903 (R. A. Progs., June 1903, Nos. 53-114.)

Claims of Garos to land.

Reference has already been made to the claims put forward by the Garos to land in the Habraghat pargana, and in 1903 the Bijni zamindar agreed to allow the Garos 25 per cent of the revenue realized from the Bijni A *mahal*, on consideration that they abandoned for ever all claim of any description to this land. In making this compromise it should be noted that the zamindar

* *Vide* No. $\frac{601}{3957}$ M J, dated 1st September 1902, from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner to the Government of India.

declined to admit that the Garos had any rights whatsoever in these lands. The Garos accepted this compromise, but subsequently repudiated it, as, misled by an intriguer, they put forward claims, for which obviously there is no foundation, to the whole of the Habraghat pargana.*

In the Plains there are two permanently settled estates with whose management Government has no direct concern. One estate, which is known as Pirpal Baklai, is situated near Mahendraganj and covers an area of 428 acres. The other is the Mechpara B *mahal* to which reference has been already made. The remainder of the plains mauzas is managed directly by Government, though, in the areas which form part of the Goalpara zamindaries, the landlords receive 75 per cent of the collections. In 1903-04, the net cropped area of the plains mauzas, including Pirpal Baklai, was 82,000 bighas, rather more than half of which was included in the boundaries of the zamindars' estates, and the total land revenue Rs. 28,732, more than two-thirds of which was realized in the zamindari *mahals*. Land revenue is assessed at the following rates per *bigha* :—*basti* Re. 1 or As. 12, *rupit* As. 8 and As. 6, and *faringati* As. 6 and As. 4. First class land is known as *kaimi*, second class land as *char*. In the hills, town lands and two small sites on Tura peak are held on annual

Land settle-
ment in
plains
mauzas.

* The total revenue derived from the plains portions of the Garo Hills is not large, but the questions of boundary and title are a little obscure. The most important papers on the subject in the Assam Secretariat are File No. 63 J. of 1878. R. A. Progs., April 1902, Nos. 1-97; R. A. Progs., September 1902, Nos. 63-74; R. A. Progs., June 1903, Nos. 53-114; and R. A. Progs., March 1905, Nos. 90-124.

leases, and the Baptist Mission hold 84 *bighas* of land on a thirty years' lease in Tura station. Land in Tura station which is not occupied by Government servants for residential purposes is assessed at Rs. 2 per *bigha* with a minimum assessment of Re. 1, except in the bazar where the rates are Rs. 4 and Rs. 2 respectively. The rate assessed on land held on 30 years' lease is Re. 1 per *bigha*. The total current land revenue demand in the plains mauzas in 1903-04 was Rs. 37,500, out of which the zamindar's share amounted to Rs. 15,600. Plough cultivation on low land in the hills mauzas is also assessed to land revenue, but for purposes of administrative convenience such land is always amalgamated with the plains mauzas. *Jhum* cultivation on outlying hills in the plains mauzas is taxed at the rate of Rs. 2 per cultivating house.

**Assessment
in the hills.**

In the hills no attempt is made to measure up the actual area under cultivation, but a tax is levied of Rs. 2 per house, except in a few villages which are included in the zamindar estates. The incidence of this taxation is much lighter than the incidence of land revenue in the plains. The Garos are prosperous and the question of raising the house tax and of thus compelling them to contribute a little more towards the cost of the administration of the district is now under consideration.

**Garos rights
in land.**

In the hills, the *nokma* or headman of the village is, according to Garo customs, considered to have *jhum* rights over a certain tract of land. All members of the village are, however, allowed to cultivate rent free, and

even if a foreigner or Garo from another village settles on the land, he is only required to pay a purely nominal quit rent, such as four annas in cash or a present of fowls and liquor. The *nokma* thus, under Garo usage, reaps little or no benefit from such rights as he is considered to possess, and he does not appear to have ever occupied the position of an ordinary landlord.*

For the purposes of the assessment and collection of ^{Revenue collection.} the revenue the plains portion of the district is divided into four mauzas. The staff consists of four mauzadars and 12 mandals under a supervisor kanungo. In the hills house tax is collected by 55 lashkars and 5 sirdars, who are remunerated by a commission of 10 per cent on the collections. The current demand on account of house tax in 1903-04 was Rs. 43,000, out of which Rs. 3,400 was payable to the zamindars.

The revenue raised under the head of excise in the ^{Excise.} Garo Hills is insignificant. Details will be found in Table XII. There is one opium shop at Mahendraganj. Opium is only consumed by the people of the plains mauzas, many of whom satisfy their requirements from shops in Goalpara or Mymensingh, and even the shop at Mahendraganj obtains its supplies of opium from the Dhubri treasury. There are two ganja shops, one at Garobadha and one at Mahendraganj, and country spirit shops at Mahendraganj and Tura. Revenue is raised at these shops on the out-still system. The Garos

* This description of the Garo theories with regard to rights in land is taken from Deputy Commissioner's letter No. 142 R., dated 20-8-03. The subject is a complicated one and it would not be safe to accept the views therein set forth as correct, without further inquiry.

however prefer their home-made liquor, of which they drink large quantities. The system of manufacture is described in the monograph on the tribe.

**Income Tax
and stamps.**

Income Tax is assessed in the Garo Hills, but the total number of assessees in 1903-04 was only 26, 14 of whom paid on salaries drawn from Government or other sources. Assessable assets of the zamindars contribute the bulk of the remaining tax. Revenue is realized both from Judicial and non-Judicial stamps, but the total amount so obtained is insignificant and in 1903-04 was less than Rs. 2,000.

**Public
Works.**

An overseer of the Public Works Department is stationed in the district, who works under the supervision of the Executive Engineer stationed at Dhubri. Public buildings and the road from Tura to Manikarchar are under the Department. The maintenance of the other roads and bridle paths is under the direct control of the Deputy Commissioner, who entrusts the repair of fixed lengths of path to the villages in the neighbourhood, for which they are paid at a contract rate per mile.

Government.

There are no sub-divisions in the district and the usual staff posted at headquarters consists of the Deputy Commissioner, the District Superintendent of Police, who is also Commandant of the Military Police Battalion, and the Military Assistant Surgeon, both of whom exercise judicial powers during the absence of the Deputy Commissioner on tour. An Extra Assistant Conservator of Forests is also usually posted to the district. Special rules are in force for the administration of criminal and

civil justice.* The jurisdiction of the High Court is barred except over European British subjects in criminal cases, and the Chief Commissioner is the chief appellate authority. The Deputy Commissioner is empowered to pass sentences of death, transportation, and fine and imprisonment up to any amount, but the imprisonment must not exceed the maximum that could be awarded for the offence under the Indian Penal Code, and the fine is limited to the value of the offender's property. Death sentences, and sentences of seven year's imprisonment or transportation or more, require the confirmation of the Chief Commissioner.

Petty criminal cases may, under certain restrictions, be tried by the village authorities or *lashkars*, who may impose fines up to the amount of Rs. 50. Civil cases up to any amount may be tried by the *lashkars* under similar restrictions, provided that the parties are resident in their jurisdiction. Judicial work is not heavy and in 1902 only 184 persons were brought to trial in the district, excluding persons brought to trial before the *lashkars* but not convicted, for whom there are no returns. Fifty-five civil suits were disposed of in the same year, but only four were contested.

The Garos have developed the theory of the liability, to civil damages to a quite unusual degree. Every injury demands appropriate compensation or *dai*, and rather amusing instances are on record of the grounds on which claims for *dai* have from time to time been

* Vide Manual of Local Rules and Orders, p. 92.

based. On one occasion a Garo was assisting his host to stuff the mouths of his guests with a savoury mess of rice and chillies. Inadvertently he dropped some of the food, and in picking it up scraped up a little mud with it. One of the guests discovered that there was some alien substance in the food that he was eating, and brought claims for heavy compensation. Strange to say the claim was allowed by the village headman, but disallowed by the Deputy Commissioner, on appeal. On another occasion, a wild elephant smashed in the roof of a hut in which an old woman was sleeping, put its trunk in through the hole, and tore from her ear a bunch of earrings. She promptly laid a plaint against the elephant, since, as it was a tusker, she argued, and not unreasonably, that, if only it could be killed, she could recover compensation from the sale of its tusks. In another case A sued B for damages because B's brother had died of cholera, and A's brother had subsequently contracted the disease and died. Compensation for loss of life due to epidemics introduced from outside is, however, quite in accord with the views of the hillmen on the northern frontier of the Assam Valley. Cases which cannot be decided by direct evidence used often to form the subject of an ordeal. One simple form which is still employed is to place a pot of water on a tripod over a fire and to see whether it boils within a certain time. Another kind of ordeal demanded from the defendant considerable faith in the justice of his cause and in the alertness and reliability of his guardian gods. The accused person submitted to be tied up for several nights

alone in the jungle, and if he was not taken by a tiger it was assumed that his story was correct. The milder manners of the present day still recognize this test, but substitute a *murghi* for a man.

The civil police of the district in 1901 consisted of 66 head constables and men under a sub-inspector. There are outposts at Dalu, Garobadha, Mahendraganj, and Phulbari, each with a strength of seven men, and a road post of two men at Khuapara. The garrison of the district is, however, furnished by a military police battalion, which in 1903 had a strength of 4 native officers and 183 non-commissioned officers and men. In the cold weather one native officer with a non-commissioned officer and 31 men are deputed to hold two outposts on the northern frontier of Kamrup. The rest of the force is concentrated at headquarters. There is a small subsidiary jail at Tura which has accommodation for 20 male and 3 female convicts. Further particulars with regard to the jail will be found in Table XIV.

**Police and
Jails.**

Education in the Garo Hills is in the hands of the Baptist Mission, and such progress have they made that in 1903-04 15 per cent of the boys of school-going age were under instruction, a percentage more than double of that recorded in the Naga Hills and little inferior to that returned from Darrang and Lakhimpur. The proportion of girls at school was considerably higher than that returned from any district except the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The total number of children at school in 1903-04 was nearly three times the number in the

Education.

Naga Hills, but even as long ago as 1874-75, when we had been only a few years in occupation of the hills, there were 457 children at school. There are no secondary schools in the district, but in 1902-03 there were 3 upper primary and 86 lower primary schools. There is also a special school at Tura in which Garos are trained to serve as teachers. The missionaries have translated a number of primers into the Garo language so that children are instructed in their own tongue, which is printed in the Roman character.

Medical.

The district has always been considered to be most malarious and unhealthy, and for many years it was thought that it would be quite impossible for Europeans to live amongst these low and densely wooded hills. In spite of this, there was a substantial increase in the population between 1891 and 1901, and it is probable that the Bodo tribes themselves have become, to some extent at any rate, immune to malarial poisoning. Malaria fevers of severe remittent and intermittent type are, however, common in every portion of the district, from June to October being the most unhealthy season of the year. In the early days of our occupation the district suffered from that acute form of malarial fever known as *kala-azar*, whose symptoms are described at length in the Gazetteer of the Nowgong District. The attention of the authorities was attracted to this disease as far back as 1869,* and it is said to have been the cause of serious mortality amongst the Garos, especially in the villages in the low hills on the northern frontier of the

* *Vide* Appendix A to the Sanitary Report of the Province of Assam in 1882.

district. The disease gradually burnt itself out, and in the eighties ceased to be of much importance. Cases of *kala-azar* still, however, occur amongst the villager on the hills near the Darang river.

The Garos are fully alive to the advantages of vaccination and during the five years ending with 1902-03 no less than 108 per mille of the population were successfully vaccinated, a ratio nearly three times as high as that reported for the Province as a whole. Small pox is in consequence by no means common. Cholera is not endemic in the hills but sporadic cases not unfrequently occur. The custom of eating decomposed meat and fish not unfrequently gives rise to outbreaks of ptomaine poisoning, with symptoms closely resembling those of cholera. Leprosy is also said to be unusually common.

There are four dispensaries in the district, two at Tura, one of which is a private dispensary managed by the missionaries, and one a Government Hospital with accommodation for in-patients, one at Dalu, and one at Mahendraganj. Ulcers and skin diseases are the complaints most generally treated at these dispensaries, but there are a large number of cases of malarial fever, and of diseases of the eye and of the respiratory system. Further details with regard to these dispensaries will be found in Tables XVII and XVIII. Venereal diseases are apparently not common. When left to themselves the Garos treat most ailments by prayer and sacrifice, though they apply the juice of a plant, which has a corrosive effect, to malignant sores.

APPENDIX.

List of Tables.

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STATEMENT A.

List of markets.

Name of the place at which market is held.	Days of week when held.	Name of the place at which market is held.	Days of week when held.
Tura ...	Saturday ...	Samandagiri ...	Every 12th day.
Garobadha ...	Tuesday ...	Hallidayganj ...	Friday.
Rangapani ...	Thursday ...	Bhaitbari ...	Monday.
Kalaichar ...	Friday ...	Rajabala ...	Sunday.
Mahendraganj ...	Tuesday ...	Machanpani ...	Tuesday.
Kudal dhoha ...	Monday ...	Bangal Khatta ...	Wednesday.
Bahadurkata ...	Saturday ...	Mowlakandi ...	Sunday.
Pura kasua ...	Tuesday ...	Kanchon Kuna ...	Friday.
Dalu ...	Monday ...	Raghupara ...	Wednesday.
Gobra kura ...	Tuesday ...	Karkuta ...	Saturday.
Ghoshgaon ...	Saturday ...	Depa ...	Wednesday.
Baghmara ...	Tuesday ...	Rongrongiri ...	Saturday.
Chakpatgiri ...	Thursday ...	Bajeng duba ...	Thursday.

TABLE I.

TABLE I.
Average maximum and minimum temperatures registered at Tura, in 1884.

	Year.	December.	November.	October.	September.	August.	July.	June.	May.	April.	March.	February.	January.
Maximum	...	72°·6	77°·5	82°·1	85°·6	84°·4	85°·3	83°·7	83°·4	86°·9	85°·8	65°·1	66°·1
Minimum	...	55°·7	61°·0	68°·4	73°·3	73°·8	74°·3	71°·6	68°·0	70°·0	66°·8	55°·1	53°·2

TABLE II.
Rainfall.

Months.	AVERAGE RAINFALL (IN INCHES) FOR 30 YEARS AT TURA.	
January	...	...
February	...	...
March	...	...
April	...	...
May	...	...
June	...	...
July	...	...
August	...	...
September	...	...
October	...	...
November	...	...
December	...	...
Total of year		...

TABLE III.
General statistics of population.

Particulars.				Persons.	Males.	Females.
Population	...	...	1901	138,274	70,035	68,239
			1891	121,570	61,213	60,357
			1881	109,548	55,951	53,597
			1872	100,780	50,390	50,390
Variation	...	{ 1891—1901		+16,704	+8,822	+7,882
		{ 1881—1891		+12,022	+5,262	+6,760
		{ 1872—1881		+8,768	+5,561	+3,207
1901						
Religion	...	Hindus	...	13 274	7,233	6,041
		Muhammadans	...	7,804	4,143	3,661
		Animistic	...	113,274	56,542	56,732
		Total Christians	...	3,647	1,954	1,693
		Baptists	...	3,418	1,831	1,587
		Other religions	...	275	163	112
Civil condition. —						
		Unmarried	...	67,325	37,687	29,638
		Married	...	64,499	30,812	33,687
		Widowed	...	6,450	1,536	4,914
Literacy.—						
		Literate in Bengali		923	800	123
		Literate in English		104	82	22
		Illiterate	...	137,105	69,012	68 093
Languages spoken.—						
		Bengali	...	18,112	9,482	8,630
		Garo	...	106,948	53,412	53,536
		Rabha	...	6,301	3,128	3,173

Note. — The figures for 1891 and the preceding years have been taken from Imperial Table II of the Census Report of 1901.

TABLE IV.

Birthplace, race, caste, and occupation.

		Persons.	Males.	Females.
Birthplace.—				
	Born in district ...	124,644	62,397	62,247
	Born in other parts of Province.	8,175	4,451	3,724
	Born in Bengal ...	4,572	2,533	2,039
	" " the United Provinces.	84	67	17
	" " Nepal ...	753	557	196
	" elsewhere ...	46	30	16
Race and caste.—				
	European ...	18	9	9
	Garos ...	103,538	51,615	51,923
	Hajongs ...	5,258	2,720	2,538
	Rabhas ...	7,749	3,863	3,886
Occupation.—				
	Workers ...	79,765	42,885	36,880
	Dependents ...	58,509	...	...
Total supported.—				
	Land-holders ...	42,901	19,680	23,221
	Tenants ...	12,107	6,412	5,695
	Cultivators (unspecified)	75,380	40,585	34,795

TABLE

Crop statistics for the plains

Particulars.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Total cropped area ...	27,448	28,118	30,604	30,492
Area under rice ...	20,596	21,279	23,606	23,006
" " mustard ...	2,676	2,705	3,421	3,680
" " jute ...	2,027	1,876	1,311	1,800
" " all other crops ...	2,149	2,258	2,266	2,006

TABLE
Reserved

Name of Reserve.	Area in square miles.	Character of Forests.
Dhima	9	The quantity of sal is very disproportionate to the area and fairly thick at the south-east bend of the reserve. Lower portions of the hills are covered with Tarai bamboos.
Dilma	2	The reserve contains a good deal of sal with inferior mixed forest, occasional Sida, Koroi and other good trees are met with but bamboos cover a very large area.
Raja Simla	7	The forest consists almost wholly of sal mixed with bamboos, a few Sida, Koroi and Gomari trees being occasionally met with.
Ildek	2	Sal occupies the interior valleys and slopes and the hills facing Ildek. It is mixed with bamboos and probably does not occupy more than half the area. Koroi, Sida and Gomari very much mixed with bamboos are found in the lower portions.
Dambu	8	Sal occurs in patches both pure and mixed. Pure sal occupies the valley. Tarai bamboos mixed with scrub jungle are found in the deserted <i>jhums</i> .
Darugiri	4	Exceedingly well stocked with sal which covers the whole of the flat land in the centre. Hills on the north and in the north-east are covered with sal mixed with bamboo and lower hill forests.
Chima-Bangsi	15	Both hilly and level lands. There are scattered clumps of sal but very little other timber of any value. Sida, Paroli and Koroi are found here and there.
Rongrengiri	14	This is a series of plateaux and small hillocks two-thirds covered with sal.
Songrak	14	Hills. About half the forest is covered with sal.

VI.

Forests.

RECEIPTS.											
1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs. 446	Rs. 272	Rs. 750	Rs. 807	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
21	...	...	...								
263	14	92	10								
326	616	747	105								
2,098	167	...	27,625								
...	...	...	...								
1,344	328	396	314								
12	20	...	...								
...	...	...	...								

TABLE
Reserved

Name of Reserve.	Area in square miles.	Character of Forests.
Biju	2	Sal occupies the south-east corner of reserve. The northern half of the reserve contains some fairly good mixed forest, but the remainder is mere scrub. The prominent trees are Sida, Makra, Gomari and Akshi.
Rewak	2	Sal occupies about $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the reserve to the north-west. The triangular bit of low land along the bank of Someswari contains scrub, mixed with coarse grass and bamboos. In the rest of the mixed forest there are a few Sida and Makra trees.
Imangiri	3	Sal is in one compact block occupying the south-west of the reserve. Three-fourths of the area is covered with mixed forest containing Koroi, Sida, Makra, Paroli, Sam, Nahor and Ajhar.
Baghmara	19	Hills. There are narrow clumps of sal poles on the bank of the Someswari. A few Koroi and Rangi trees are also found.
Angratoli	17	A range of low hills with a small area of plain. About one half covered with sal. Koroi is abundant. Gomari and Makra are also found.
Dibru Hill	9	Patches of young sal occur here and there. The land to the west is very broken and sal plants are coming up on the top of the <i>tillas</i> . Towards the southern extremity, the forest is composed of more or less inferior evergreen trees and scrubs.
Bolsalgiri	1	There are 3 or 4 tiny patches of sal but most of the forest consists of bamboos and scrub.
Tura	1	Sal is scattered along the full length of the reserve. A few Gomari trees and Poma and Koroi are also met with.
Jinari	10	Plains. Little sal but a considerable quantity of Gomari, Ajhar, Paroli, Poma and Sida.

TABLE VI.

77

VI.

Forests—(concluded.)

RECEIPTS.											
1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs. 1	Rs. 121	Rs. 56	Rs. 10	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
34	97	565	99								
109	819	400	552								
653	483	646	127								
116	229	115	62								
516	221	1,985	1,583								
...	...	..	...								
61	50	10	116								
340	660	509	61								

TABLE

Fire protection and outturn of timber and

Details.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
Area in sq. miles under protection	134	134	139	139
Area in sq. miles protected ...	128	134	137	139
Percentage ...	96	100	99	100
Cost Rs.	1,544	1,433	1,359	1,407
<i>Reserved Forests.</i>				
Area in sq. miles ...	134	134	139	139
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)—				
Timber ... c.ft.	47,726	26,316	21,300	51,140
Fuel ... c.ft.	...	192	...	8
<i>Unclassed State Forests.</i>				
Area in sq. miles ...	2,971	2,961	2,955	2,954
Outturn (Government and purchasers only)—				
Timber ... c.ft.	1,231,196	8,824,666	1,384,590	1,390,385
Fuel ... c.ft.	2,051,200	1,276,052	2,248,248	2,243,365
Wax Rs.	42	35	39	57
Lac Rs.	...	133	11,614	6,865
Rubber Rs.	17	...	...	...
Forest receipts ... Rs.	48,849	51,747	81,284	1,07,110
Forest expenditure ... Rs.	36,389	35,506	49,967	84,334
Balance Rs.	12,460	16,241	31,317	22,776

TABLE VII.

VII.

fuel and value of minor forest produce.

1904-05.	
1905-06.	
1906-07.	
1907-08.	
1908-09.	
1909-10.	
1910-11.	
1911-12.	

TABLE VIII.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee at Tura.

		Common rice.	Salt.	Matikalai.
1880	{ 2nd Week of February ...	14	5 $\frac{1}{8}$	8
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	20	5 $\frac{1}{8}$	11 $\frac{1}{2}$
1890	{ 2nd Week of February ...	10	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	13
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	10	7	11
1900	{ 2nd Week of February ...	16	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	9	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	10
1901	{ 2nd Week of February ...	9	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	7	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
1902	{ 2nd Week of February ...	10	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	11	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
1903	{ 2nd Week of February ...	12	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	8
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	13	8	8
1904	{ 2nd Week of February ...	15	8	10
	{ 2nd Week of August ...	12	8	10
1905	{ 2nd Week of February ...	16	8	11
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1906	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1907	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1908	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1909	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1910	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1911	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			
1912	{ 2nd Week of February ...			
	{ 2nd Week of August ...			

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143-153, 157, 158, & 159.	...	...	1	1	2	2
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	1	1	2	1	1	1
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302-304, 307, 308, & 396.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(iv) Grievous hurt, and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324-326, 329, 331, 333, & 335.	1	1	...	...	1	1
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 & 357.	2	1	1	...	1	...
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	2	1	1	...	7	4
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 & 398	..	...	...	...	...	...
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 271, 282, 428, 429, 430-433, & 435-40.	3	1	1	1	1	...
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449-452, 454, 455 & 457-460.	23	3	17	...	7	1
(x) Wrongful restraint & confinement, sections 341-344.	1	...	...	...	1	1

TABLE IX.

IX.

Civil Justice.

[illegible]

TABLE

Statistics of Criminal and

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
<i>Criminal Justice—(concl.)</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property.	...	...	...	...	...	...
(xiii) Theft, sections 379-382 ...	15	3	21	10	23	14
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	10	9	3	3	3	3
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	5	...	5	3	9	5
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	1	1	...	...	...	...
Total ...	64	20	52	19	56	32
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and movables ...	39		65		64	
Title and other suits ...	1		1		2	
Rent suits ...	3		1		12	
Total ...	43		67		78	

TABLE

Finance—

Principal Heads.	1890-91.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1903-03.	1903-04.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land Revenue ...	13,507	19,658	19,451	21,211	20,885
House-tax...	35,379	39,676	40,245	39,700	39,580
Judicial stamps ...	908	904	934	994	1,310
Non-Judicial stamps...	473	619	590	526	604
Opium ...	87	140	...	147	120
Country spirit	1,478	1,800	1,053	1,510	1,773
Ganja ...	154	652	553	691	965
Other heads of excise...	613	600	600	596	580
Assessed taxes ...	1,683	1,882	1,817	1,852	2,147
Forests ...	41,839	48,849	51,747	81,284	1,07,110
Registration ...	31	38	33	42	53
Total ...	96,152	1,14,818	1,17,023	1,48,553	1,75,127

TABLE X.

X.

Receipts.

[illegible]

TABLE

Miscellaneous

Particulars.			1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
			Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Fisheries	...	...	808	1,265	1,365	1,832
House-tax	...	...	39,676	40,245	39,700	39,580
Other heads	...	...	1,962	2,390	1,505	2,132
Total revenue	...	...	42,446	43,900	42,570	43,544

TABLE XI.

XI.

land revenue.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.

TABLE
Ex

Principal heads.	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
No. of opium shops ...	1	1	1	1
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	14)	...	147	120
Opium issued ... Mds.	...	.	...	...
Duty on opium sold ... Rs.	...	...	...	...
No. of ganja shops ...	2	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses ... Rs.	652	553	691	965
	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.
Amount of ganja issued ...	2 31 0	1 33 0	2 5' 0	1 32 8
Duty on ganja sold ... Rs.	...	...	...	...
No. of country spirit shops ...	2	2	2	2
Amount paid for licenses .. Rs.	1,800	1,053	1,510	1,773
Other heads of excise revenue Rs.	600	600	596	580

TABLE XII.

XII.

cise.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.	M. s. ch.

TABLE XIII.

Strength of police force.

Particulars.	1891.	1901.
CIVIL POLICE.		
SUBORDINATE STAFF.		
Sub-Inspectors	1	1
Head Constables	8	8
Constables	58	58
MILITARY POLICE.		
Officers	29	25
Men	198	178
Total expenditure Rs.	52,242	66,054

In 1881 there were only frontier police and no civil police.

TABLE XIV.

Jail statistics.

Tura Subsidiary Jail.

	1881.	1891.	1901.
Average daily population ... { Male ...	17·90	19·57	14·84
Female ...	·36	·14	·07
Rate of jail mortality per 1,000 ...	55	...	...
Expenditure on jail maintenance Rs.	2,196	2,698	1,291
Cost per prisoner* (excluding civil prisoners) Rs.	43	38	60
Profits on jail manufacture ... Rs.	...	257	155
Earnings per prisoner † ... Rs.	...	15	15

* On rations and clothing only.

† Calculated on the average number sentenced to labour.

TABLE

Edu

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
PRIMARY SCHOOLS.				
<i>Upper Primary Schools.</i>				
Number	2	2	3	3
„ of boys reading in Upper Primary classes.	13	23	6	44
„ of boys reading in Lower Primary classes.	55	86	112	69
<i>Lower Primary Schools.</i>				
Number	83	97	86	91
„ of boys reading in three Upper classes.	} (a) 1,106	(a) 1,202	1,082	821
„ of boys reading in Lower Primary classes.			52	497
FEMALE EDUCATION.				
Number of Girls' Schools	...	...	...	...
Number of girls reading (whether in girls' or in boys' school) in—				
Upper Primary Schools	8	7	8	7
Lower Primary Schools	228	239	213	228

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE XV.

95

XV.

cation.

1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.

TABLE XVI.
Educational Finance.

Particulars.	No. of institutions.	EXPENDITURE ON INSTITUTIONS MAINTAINED OR AIDED BY PUBLIC FUNDS IN 1900-01 FROM—					Amount per head of scholar.
		Provincial re- venues.	District and mun- icipal funds.	Fees.	Other sources.	Total.	
		Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs. a. p.
Training and Special Schools	...	1,295	...	..	2,039	3,334	26 0 9
<i>Primary Boys' Schools :—</i>							
Upper	...	236	...	70	367	673	7 14 8
Lower	...	2,716	...	..	3,369	6,105	4 11 1
Total	86	4,247	...	70	5,795	10,112	6 10 11

TABLE XVII.

Medical.

Particulars.	1881.	1891.	1901.
Number of dispensaries	1	1	(a) 3
Daily average number of in-door patients	12·82	9·50	6·10
“ “ “ out-door “	14·82	9·52	82·12
Cases treated	2,002	1,735	9,552
Operations performed	116	26	135
Total income Rs.	976	2,348	4,604
Income from Government ... Rs.	756	2,257	4,245
Income from Local and Municipal Funds, Rs.	15	...	...
Subscriptions	95	91	249
Total expenditure Rs.	821	2,348	4,567
Expenditure on establishment ... Rs.	214	1,428	2,215
Ratio per mille of persons successfully vaccinated.	(b) 23·76	44·48	89·59
Cost per case Rs.	Not available.	0 2 8	0 1 2

(a) Excludes the private dispensary at Tura in which 5 in-door patients and 3,324 out-door patients were treated and 72 operations performed.

(b) Figure for 1881-82.

TABLE

Dispen

Name of dispensa- ries.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Tura ...	2,470	3,455	2,608	4,103	2,827	4,772	2,261	4,683	2,695	5,022
Dalu ...	865	3,756	853	3,973	911	4,202	776	5,451	1,061	6,102
Mahendra- ganj.	...	...	1,015	1,476	995	3,140	867	3,152	922	3,727

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CHAPTER I. PHYSICAL ASPECTS.

Physical aspects—Plains—Rivers—Geology—Climate and rainfall —
Botany—Fauna.

The district of the Lushai Hills is situated between $22^{\circ} 20'$ and $24^{\circ} 27'$ N. and $92^{\circ} 20'$ and $93^{\circ} 29'$ E and covers an area of 7,227 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Sylhet and Cachar and the Native State of Manipur ; on the east and south by the Chin Hills ; on the south by Arakan ; and on the west by the Chittagong Hill Tracts and the Native State of Hill Tippera.

The whole of the district consists of ranges of hills running in a north and south direction, separated from one another by narrow valleys. The general height of these ranges is about 3,000 feet, though here and there, there are peaks over 6,000 feet in height, and the Blue Mountain in the South Lushai Hills rises to a height of 7,100 feet. The general elevation of the district rises towards the east, and in the Chin Hills there are several summits over 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. The sides of the hills are covered with dense forest or bamboo jungle, except in those places where they have been cleared for cultivation, and a stream or river is invariably to be found in the narrow valleys at their feet. The scenery of the district is thus described by Captain Shakespear, who served amongst the Lushais for many years.*

* *Vide Journal of the Society of Arts No. 2201, Vol. XLIII, January 1895.*

"From the summit of the Lungleh hill a grand view of the country is obtained. Turn to the west, and you look down over 2,000 feet on to a confused mass of hills and valleys stretching away to the horizon. It is a wonderful sight, these miles upon miles of tree-tops. Look which way you will, little but forest is to be seen. Here and there a cliff shows out white amidst the green, patches of bright yellow show where crops of rice are ripening, and here and there a hill-top is crowned by a little brown patch, denoting a village. For some twenty miles westward of Lungleh the country is practically uninhabited, and is the great hunting ground of the Lushais.

• • • •

"It would, I imagine, be difficult to find jungle more dense than that in the valleys between Demagiri and Lungleh—huge trees, with great buttressed trunks, raise their straight white stems to the leafy roof; creepers of all sizes wind round these massive columns, hanging in festoons from one to the other, or trail along the ground, twisted and knotted together. Ferns grow in profusion on all sides, on the rocks beside the streams, clinging to the trunks of the forest kings, and swinging in mid-air on the giant creepers. The branches of the trees are so covered with orchids that the bark is barely visible, while beneath is a tangled mass of vegetation, thorny canes and shrubs being twined together in such confusion that it is only by dint of much cutting and clearing that a passage can be made through it. The pace at which this jungle grows, during the rains, is almost incredible. In spite of two clearings yearly, the Government road is at times almost impassable. The bamboo jungle is monotonous to travel through, as the bamboos do not grow in clusters, but each stem by itself, and among the straight green stems there is no undergrowth to relieve the eye."

Plains.

Here and there, amidst this jungle-covered waste of hills and narrow valleys, there are plains, which are believed to have formed in the beds of silted up lakes. They have as a rule an elevation of about 4,500 feet and are covered with a thick layer of rich alluvial soil. They are surrounded by hills which slope gently towards the plain, but are generally very steep, often precipitous, on the outer side. Through the centre runs a sluggish

stream which escapes through a narrow gorge, below which is generally a fall of some height. The largest of these plains is Champhai, which has a length of about seven miles, and, at the widest part, is nearly three miles across. A few miles north of Fort Tregear there is a plain at Vanlaiphai, about six miles long and from a quarter to half a mile in width. The slopes of the valley are, moreover, gentle and undulating, and thus give the plain the effect of being wider than it really is.

The most important rivers are the Tlong or Dhales-**Rivers.** wari, the Sonai, and the Tuivol which drain the northern portion of the country and eventually fall into the Barak. The southern hills are drained by the Koladyne on the east, with its tributaries the Mat, Tuichang, Tiao and Tuipui; while the Karnaphuli, at the mouth of which stands Chittagong, with its tributaries the Tuichong, Kao, Deh, Phairang and Tuilianpui form the western drainage system. The drainage levels of the country are unusually complicated. The Tlong for some 40 miles of its length runs due northwards, while parallel to it to the east the Mat and to the west the Deh run due south. In the same way the Tuivol and the Tuichang and the Tuilianpui and Gudur run parallel to one another for many miles, but in opposite directions. The Tuichong and Phairang run north till they join the Deh, which then takes a westerly turn and delivers their combined waters into the Karnaphuli which flows south-west.

The hills consist of sandstones and slabs of tertiary **Geology.** age, thrown into long folds, the axes of which run in a

nearly north and south direction. The rocks are a continuation southwards of those forming the Patkai range, and were probably laid down in the delta or estuary of a large river issuing from the Himalayas in the tertiary period. Marine fossils of that time have been found near Lungleh embedded in nodular dark grey sandstone.

**Climate and
rainfall.**

The valleys are feverish and unhealthy, and during the rains the climate, even on the lower hills, is moist and enervating. In the higher ridges it is fairly cool and pleasant even at the hottest seasons of the year. In March and April violent storms from the north-west sweep over the hills. The average rainfall at Aijal is 80 inches in the year; at Lungleh some distance to the south it is no less than 131 inches. The average rainfall in each month will be found in Table I. Owing to the steepness of the hillsides and the narrowness of the valleys the rivers rise after heavy rain with wonderful rapidity. During the last four days of May 1889 over 27 inches of rain fell in the South Lushai Hills, and the level of the Karnaphuli river rose over 50 feet.

Botany.

The following account of the botany of the district has been received from the Director of the Botanical Survey of India. The Lushai Hills are clad for the most part with dense evergreen forest and bamboo. The most conspicuous and one of the commonest trees is *dipterocarpus turbinatus* distinguished by its huge size and immense buttresses. Other very common trees

are *saurauja punduana*, *schima wallichii*, *duabanga sonneratioides*. Figs are common, and at high elevations *quercus* and *castanopsis* abound. Palms such as *pinango*, *caryota*, *licuala* and *calamus* are frequent on the lower slopes. The undergrowth consists of such species as *clematis grewiaeflora*, *abutilon polyandrum*, *hibiscus*, *triumfetta*, *crotalaria*, *flemingia*, *rubus*, *combretum*, *mussaenda*, *ixora*, *ardisia*, *jasminum*, *phlogacanthus*, *clerodendron*, *girardinia*.

Sutamineous plants of the genera *curcuma*, *amomum* and *alpinia* are quite common. Epiphytic plants are well represented by the abundance of orchids belonging to such genera as *dendrobium*, *bulbophyllum*, *eria*, *pholidota*, *cymbidium*, *aerides*, *vanda*, &c. Species of *raphidophora* are also very common. The herbaceous vegetation is not prominent consisting chiefly of such widely spread plants as *ageratum conyzoides*, *conyza stricta*, species of *blumea*, *gnaphalium*, *desmodium*, *begonia*, *hedyotis*, *heliotropium*, *mazus*, *toveria*, *rungia*, *plantago*, *amarantus*, *polygonum*, &c. Ferns are common belonging to such genera as *pteris*, *asplenium*, *nephrodium*, *polypodium*, *onychium*, *lygodium*, *angiopteris*

Wild animals are numerous in the more sparsely **Fauna.** populated portions of the district and include elephants, the two horned rhinoceros, bison, tigers, leopards, bears, and various kinds of deer. Bears are of two varieties, the Himalayan black bear (*ursus torquatus*) and the Malay bear (*ursus malayanus*) and are unusually

common. In 1904 rewards were paid for the destruction of 249 of these animals, or very nearly half the total number of bears killed in the Province of Assam. Wild dogs also are common and frequently kill off young stock. The serow (*nemorhædus*) is found on the higher hills. Small game include jungle fowl (*gallus ferrugineus*) and several kinds of pheasants.

CHAPTER II. HISTORY.

Summary of raids—Raids on the south—Troubles in 1888—Further raids and expedition of 1889-90—Rising in 1890—Punitive measures—Outbreak in 1892—Promenade in 1892-93—Policy on the north-east frontier.

The history of our relations with the Lushai and Kuki tribes down to the end of the year 1883 will be found in the North-East Frontier of Bengal by Mr. (afterwards Sir Alexander) Mackenzie, pages 287 to 365 and need not be recapitulated here. Briefly, it is a history of their raids into British territory, and of our efforts to put a stop to this perpetual annoyance by punitive expeditions, by the locating of outposts along the frontier, and by diplomatic efforts. None of these measures were, however, productive of anything more than purely temporary results, and the tribes were never pacified till we had established a strong force in the centre of the hills.

Before referring to the events of 1888 and later years, ^{Summary} it is desirable to summarize the various raids and ^{raids.} expeditions which are described at length in Mackenzie's North-East Frontier. The following were the most serious inroads into the Province of Assam. In 1844, Lal Chokla raided Sylhet and took 20 heads and was subsequently arrested by Captain Blackwood who led an expedition into the hills. In 1847, upwards of 150 persons were killed by Kukis, but it was subsequently

discovered that the massacre took place in Hill Tippera and not in British territory. In 1849, there were further raids into Sylhet and Cachar, and in 1850 Colonel Lister led an expedition into the hills, burnt one village and retired. In 1862, and again in 1868, there were further raids. In 1869, two columns of troops were sent into the hills under General Nuthall, but owing to the inclemency of the weather failed either to rescue the captives or to punish the offenders.

In 1871, there was an outbreak all along the frontier, and raiding parties entered Cachar, Sylhet, Manipur and Hill Tippera. In Cachar several tea gardens were attacked and at one of them, Alexandrapur, a planter, Mr. Winchester, was killed. In 1871-72, a strong force was sent into the hills divided into two columns which advanced from Chittagong and from Cachar. The Cachar column burnt Champhai, the principal village of the chief Lalbura, and the Chittagong column was equally successful. The effects of this expedition were felt for many years, and it was not till 1888, that the Lushais once more began to be a source of trouble.

**Raids on the
south.**

Prior to 1860, there were numerous raids upon the Chittagong frontier, but that year is famous for what is known as the great Kuki invasion. These savages burst into the plains of Tippera near Chagulneyah, burnt or plundered 15 villages, killed 185 British subjects, and withdrew again with 100 captives into their jungly fastnesses. A small expedition was sent into the hills, but it produced little practical effect, and raids, though not

on such an extensive scale, continued to be made. Peace for sixteen years was, however, obtained by the expedition of 1871-72.

In 1888, it was thought that the tribes had quietly settled down, and three British officers, Lieutenants Stewart, Baird, and Shakespear were deputed to survey the frontier on the south. Lieutenant Stewart, with two soldiers of the Leinster Regiment and a small guard of military police, was working on the Belaisuri range about twenty miles from Rangamati. He appears to have had no thought of danger, declined to post a sentry over the camp at night, and for one cause or another, reduced his guard till he was left with only the two European soldiers, a naik and five sepoy. Early one morning, he was surprised by a party of Pois headed by Hausata Dokhola, and Vantura, who found their victims completely unprepared. The European soldiers were still in bed and were killed where they lay, but Lieutenant Stewart and two sepoy were able to open fire upon their assailants. A shot through the breast soon laid that unfortunate officer low, and the two sepoy retired, taking with them two of their number who were at a little distance from the camp when the attack took place. Another sepoy was severely wounded at the first volley and subsequently killed. The cause of the raid was a dispute between husband and wife. Hausata had married a daughter of Zahuta, but he ill-treated her and she fled to her father for protection. The latter agreed to return her to her husband but for a price, the price in question being the heads of two persons who were not

Trouble in
1888.

Kukis or Lushais. It was to obtain these heads that Hausata sallied out upon the war-path. It was impossible at that time to make suitable reprisals, and in December 1888 two chiefs Lungliana and Nikama attacked a village which was only four miles distant from Demagiri, and killed and carried off the bulk of the inhabitants. Lieutenant Widdicombe, who was in command at Demagiri, at once hastened to the village, but the raiders had already left, and, as he had no provisions with him, he was unable to go further in pursuit. Punishment was, however, only for a time delayed, and in January 1889 a force, consisting of 57 British commissioned and non-commissioned officers and 1,225 men with two guns, under Colonel Tregear, was sent into the hills. The Lushais offered no opposition to this formidable host, and though Hausata's village was burnt, little damage, apart from this, was done. There was no fighting and there were only 29 deaths in a force, including followers and coolies, of nearly 4,000 souls. But the results obtained were very slight in comparison with the heavy expenditure entailed, and two British officers succumbed to the unhealthy climate of the hills.*

**Further
raids and
expedition
of 1889-90.**

This demonstration of military activity had little effect upon the Lushais, and, at the very time when the expedition was in the hills, Lianphunga, a son of Sukpilal, despatched a raiding party which devastated the Chengri valley on the Chittagong frontier.† Thirty-seven

* *Vide* Report on the Lushai expedition of 1888-1889.

† It should, however, be added that the raid took place when the troops were only assembling at Demagiri.

persons were killed by the marauders and 75 were carried off as captives. To avenge this raid troops were sent into the hills, both from the north and south, in the cold weather of 1889-90. General Tregear was in command of the column operating from Chittagong, which had a total strength of 53 British officers and 3,294 of native rank and file. From the north, Mr. Daly advanced with a force of 247 military police of all ranks, and joined hands with Colonel Skinner who had been despatched with a strong body of troops from the southern column. Mr. Daly reached Changsil towards the end of January, and there received the great majority of the persons who had been taken captive in the raid into the Chengri valley. He then proceeded to Lianphunga's village which was situated to the south of Aijal. Lianphunga came in to meet him and stated that he had raided in the Chengri valley because the inhabitants had settled in their best hunting ground and declined to move, and that he was under the impression that they were the subjects of Hill Tippera and not of the British Government. Mr. Daly did not arrest the chief but persuaded him to promise that he would surrender to Colonel Skinner on his arrival, on the understanding that he should neither be transported nor hung. Unfortunately Lianphunga learned that there were eight Sahibs with Colonel Skinner's column, and thinking that eight Sahibs could over-rule the four with Mr. Daly, and that they might possibly repudiate the agreement made with him, he began to repent him of his promise. On the arrival of Colonel Skinner a day before he was expected.

Lianphunga absconded, and when the village was occupied by the troops, it was fired by the Lushais. A few skirmishes occurred during the next three weeks, but our total loss was only one man killed and one officer and two men wounded, while the Lushais admitted to having lost four men. The resistance offered by the enemy was in fact of the feeblest, but, as it had been clearly shown that expeditions which entered the hills and withdrew again had little permanent effect, it was determined to build a stockade at Aijal, to be held during the rains. While the work was in progress there was a large gathering at Thanruma's village a little to the north. But, though the Lushais lay across the line of communication, so anxious were we to avoid unnecessary hostilities, that they were allowed to disperse without being attacked.

While these events were taking place a column was detached which burnt the villages of the two chiefs Lungliana and Nikama, who had raided the village near Demagiri. Vantura, one of the leaders of the raiding party that had killed Lieutenant Stewart, was captured by a reconnoitring party, but succeeded in making his escape, and he did not make his final submission till the end of 1890. A stockade was erected at Fort Tregear and was garrisoned with 200 rifles of the 2/2nd Gurkhas, while at Lungleh there were 140 rifles of the military police. Garrisons of military police were also left at Aijal and Changsil, and, in May 1890, Captain Browne, who had been appointed Political Officer of the North Lushai Hills, took up his quarters at the former place. The

control of the South Lushai Hills was at the same time entrusted to Captain Shakespear.

One of the first duties imposed on Captain Browne was to mete out suitable punishment to Lianphunga, and in June 1890 he held a durbar at Aijal for the purpose. He passed an order deposing this chief for four years, but subsequent events made it impossible to enforce this sentence. The questions of the payment of house-tax and the supply of labour were referred to, but, as the chiefs regarded these proposals with disfavour, the matter was allowed to drop. The Lushais were, however, by no means satisfied, and the western chiefs entered into a conspiracy to attack the stockades at Changsil and Aijal and kill the Political Officer. The rising took place on September 9th, 1890, when attacks were simultaneously made on both stockades, and Captain Browne, who was marching down the road with a small escort was ambuscaded about two miles from Changsil. He was wounded in three places in the arm, but managed to struggle on to the stockade, where he died from exhaustion due to loss of blood, a quarter of an hour after he had reached a place of safety.

Rising in
1890.

The following description of the outbreak is taken from a letter by Lieutenant Cole who was in command of the stockade at Changsil.*

Beginning of
outbreak.

"Nothing eventful then happened until the morning of the 9th, when the men, to the number of about 120, were engaged at work on the new stockade. About 50 of them had brought up their rifles,

* No. I C. H., dated Changsil, the 12th September 1890. P and J—A, For. Progs., October 1890, Nos. 1—135.

which were piled in the centre of the stockade. Work was proceeding as usual, when suddenly a single shot was heard in the direction of the old stockade. This shot did not attract much notice, as it was thought it was probably fired by some of our men at game. However, one of the Jemadars went down to find out, and soon returned, saying the Lushais had come and surrounded the lower stockade. I then fell in the men at once round the palisading of the stockade. We were soon attacked, and we could have held the stockade for as long as we liked. However, as I heard very heavy firing and the bugler constantly blowing the alarm from the lower stockade, as the majority of the men with me were without arms, and as all our rations and ammunition were in the lower stockade, with only 30 fit men left to protect it, while it requires a garrison of at least 100, I had to leave it after about half an hour. I should have done so at once had it not been that I hoped by holding the upper stockade I should give Captain Browne, whom I expected, a better chance of arriving, but, as nearly all the Lushais must have come from the same direction as he was coming, I had little hopes of his arriving in safety. I then went down to the lower stockade at about 10 A.M., and the Lushais kept up a constant fire for some two hours afterwards.

"I was arranging to make a sortie when Captain Browne arrived about half an hour afterwards, a mass of blood and evidently badly wounded. He was at once attended to, and the bleeding stopped, but he had lost nearly every drop of blood in his body, and never recovered consciousness until he died, about fifteen minutes after his arrival, from collapse.

"From what I can gather, the Lushais who came to attack us split themselves up into three parties, one of which went down to attack the bazar, which they looted after killing five out of the nine shop-keepers, and two boatmen. They also took their heads. The other party endeavoured to force an entrance at the lower end of the present stockade, and the third to do so at the upper end. They no doubt thought they would have good chances of success as nearly all the men were out on work, and they were all acquainted with our habits from constantly passing by the stockade while going to and from the bazar. Some of this latter party came up to the upper stockade to attack, when they were checked at the lower stockade."

Defence of
the stock-
ades.

News of the outbreak was at once despatched down the Dhaleswari by Lieutenant Cole. Repeated attacks

were made upon both stockades, but that officer never expressed any doubt as to the capacity of the garrisons to hold out till reinforced, though with the small force at his disposal it was impossible to attack the villages of the revolting chiefs. In reporting on the outbreak to the Government of India, the Chief Commissioner, Mr. Quinton, who, a few months later, was himself to fall a victim to the uncertain temper of the tribes upon the North-East Frontier, stated that, in his opinion, "Lieutenant Cole on this sudden emergency exhibited great coolness and sound judgment, to which it is probably mainly owing that the garrison was not surprised and cut off." Up to this date the Lushais had succeeded in killing Captain Browne, his clerk, seven coolies, five traders, two boatmen, one police sepoy, and one follower.

Two hundred men of the military police were at once pushed up from Cachar under Lieutenant Swinton. In their passage up the Dhaleswari they met with considerable opposition. Flanking parties had been sent along the river banks, but near Lenkhunga's *jhums* they had been recalled to assist in hauling the boats over some strong rapids. The Lushais seized this opportunity to open fire. Lieutenant Swinton was seated in the front of his boat, his orderly standing by him. A bullet struck the orderly on the forehead, but glanced off and buried itself in the officer's stomach, inflicting a wound which very soon proved fatal. The troops were taken on to Changsil by Lieutenant Týtler, and two hundred more sepoys arrived at that place on September 30th. On

Death of
Lieutenant
Swinton.

October 4th Thanruma, which lay between Changsil and Aijal, was attacked and destroyed, and Aijal itself relieved.

**Punitive
measures.**

Mr. McCabe was then appointed Political Officer of the Lushai Hills, and no time was lost in punishing the offending chiefs. The villages of Hrangkupa, Lalhrima, Hmingthanga, Lalsavuta and Thanruma were captured and destroyed without much difficulty. A move was then made against the village of Khalkam, the most influential of the western Lushai chiefs. The village was attacked from two sides, and captured without loss to the attacking party, though ten of the Lushais were killed. During the next few days the hamlets in the neighbourhood and the crops were destroyed, whereupon Khalkam, considering further resistance hopeless, came in. The whole of the western Lushais then submitted, and Khalkam, Lianphunga, and Thangula, who were the heads of the conspiracy, were all deported.* Fines of one hundred and eighty-four guns in all were imposed, and a considerable amount of punishment labour was exacted. The Political Officer then carried out a successful promenade through the country of the eastern Lushais. There was no opposition, and in the course of this tour he went as far south as the village of Kairuma. On April 1st, 1891, the South Lushai Hills, which had been controlled by an Assistant Political Officer under the Commissioner of Chittagong, were formed into a district and placed under the control of a Superintendent.

* Khalkam and Lianphunga hanged themselves in the Hazaribagh jail in September 1891. Thangula was released in 1896.

The Lushais at this time appeared to be quietly settling down under our rule. The villages which had been destroyed were gradually rebuilt, and house-tax was even paid, though with some demur. In January 1892, Mr. McCabe met Captain Shakespear and the other officers of Lungleh at Kairuma's village and proclaimed to the assembled chiefs at a durbar the unity of the Government policy in the hills. This was no unnecessary precaution as the hillmen were inclined to regard the officers of South and North Lushai as the representatives of two separate and distinct authorities. Outbreak in 1892.

In the following month Mr. McCabe proceeded to Lalbura's village with an escort of one hundred sepoy of the military police to enforce a demand for coolies which had been quietly but steadily ignored. The village was entered on February 29th without resistance, but the chief failed to appear before the Political Officer. On the following day, as paddy was being collected, 300 Lushais armed with guns were seen approaching. A volley was fired at them, which drove them back into the jungle, but this was only the signal for an attack delivered from every side. The village was fired by the Lushais and Mr. McCabe was compelled to retire to the crest of the hill on which it stood. Attacks were made upon this position in the evening but were repulsed without much difficulty, and on the following day the troops, who had by this time been reinforced from Aijal, occupied another hill and erected a stockade. Repeated attacks were made on this position, and on parties sent out to destroy grain and other property until the 10th April,

when a reinforcement of 300 men of the 18th Bengal Infantry arrived at Fort Aijal from Silchar, and an advance was made from Lalbura against Poiboi's village. This village was taken after some fighting on the 18th April. From that day until the end of May parties of police and military were continually employed in scouring the country, attacking the implicated villages, and destroying all stores of grain and other property that they could find. The villages of Lalruiya, Lalhleia, Bungteya and Maite were successfully captured and destroyed. With the destruction of the last-named village the campaign against the eastern Lushais came to a close and the expeditionary force returned to Aijal on the 8th June 1892, leaving a detachment of one hundred men in occupation of Lalbura's village. This chief did not finally submit till 1896 when he was allowed to found a village on payment of a heavy fine.

Captain Shakespear, on learning of the attack on Mr. McCabe, at once started to his relief, but the Howlongs rose to oppose his advance, and, as he had only an inadequate force at his disposal, he found himself unable to advance beyond the village of Vansanga until relieved by a column from Burma under Mr. Carey and Captain Rose. On their arrival the villages of Lalhrima, Lalkanglova, Tlongbuta, and Rochungnunga were destroyed.

An incident of the Eastern Lushais' rising, which deserves notice as showing the ease with which small parties of Lushais or other hillmen can attack any exposed portion of our extended frontier, was the raid of

a small party of Eastern Lushais on the Barunchara tea estate in the Hailakandi subdivision of the Cachar district. This raid, in which 42 coolies were killed, was made on the 4th April 1892, and was undoubtedly undertaken in the hope of inducing the Political Officer to abandon the advanced post at Lalbura.

During the cold weather of 1892-93, a column of military and military police under Mr. Davis, who had assumed charge of the North Lushai Hills, co-operated from Fort Aijal with a column operating from Lungleh under Captain Shakespear, to complete the punishment of the Howlong villages concerned in the outbreak of the previous cold season. Serious opposition to the advance of these two columns was expected on the Bengal side, but it became evident, some considerable time before the columns were ready to march, that any resistance was unlikely, and, as a matter of fact, none was offered. Mr. Davis subsequently visited the villages of the Kairuma group with an escort of 150 police and military, and at Kairuma's village, met Captain Shakespear who had with him an escort of similar strength.

On the conclusion of this expedition the district settled down, but for some time longer the chiefs of the Kairuma group of villages were inclined to dispute the authority of the Sirkar. Rice was supplied without demur for the use of the Shership outpost, and coolies for the carriage of the Political Officer's baggage when he visited the village, but the chiefs themselves declined to meet the Political Officer and coolies were not provided

Promenade
in 1892-93.

Kairuma
still gives
trouble.

for work on the Aijal road. Kairuma was accordingly fined 60 guns, and, as he still declined to make his submission, his village was visited in December 1895, by the Political Officer from Aijal with an escort of 300 rifles. Smaller columns co-operated from Falam and Lungleh, and thus demonstrated our ability to attack those who disputed our authority from every side. The chiefs still proved recalcitrant, and Kairuma's village was wholly, and the village of Jaduna, a Fanai chief who had disobeyed orders from Lungleh, was partially destroyed. A military police outpost was also established at Kairuma's village of Tlaikuong. In April 1898, the South Lushai Hills were transferred to the Assam Administration, and the district assumed its present form. Further information with regard to the history of the Lushai Hills will be found in the report on the Lushai expedition of 1888-89, and the report on the Chittagong column of the Chin-Lushai expedition in 1889-90, both of which were compiled in the Intelligence Branch of the Quartermaster-General's Department in India ; in the Political Report on the North Lushai Hills for the year 1890-91, printed in F.A. Progs., August 1891, Nos. 30—38 ; in the Report on the outbreak in 1892, printed in F.A. Progs., December 1892, Nos. 14—141 ; in a note recorded by Major Shakespear in 1905 ; and in the Administration Reports of the Lushai Hills district.

Mr. McCabe's political report on the North Lushai Hills for 1890-91.

The following opinions with regard to our relations with the Lushais have been left on record by Mr. McCabe, an officer of great experience of the tribes on the North-East Frontier.

We have had relations with the Lushai tribes since 1844, when Lalchokla raided on the Manipur colony of Kochabari in Par-tahghar and took 20 heads. From that time up to 1871 the districts of Sylhet and Cachar were repeatedly attacked and various measures were tried in order to facilitate the improvement of our relations with these tribes. Our policy had been an ever varying one, but it was finally decided in 1871-72 to maintain a chain of outposts along the frontier, and to send one of the Cachar officers to make annual visits to the hills and use his influence in adjusting inter-village disputes and in cultivating friendly relations with the leading chiefs. This may be described as more or less a policy of non-intervention, repudiating all desire of annexation, while at the same time attempting to thrust the thin edge of our influence into the councils of the Lushais.

The history of the North-East Frontier is pregnant with proof of the utter fallacy of the judgment prompting this line of action, and a consideration of the mental training of the savage tribes on these borders will clearly show in what light they regarded it. Every Lushai, Kuki, or Naga is brought up with the idea that rapine and bloodshed are meritorious acts, and that "he has right who has the might, and let him keep who can." Leniency, mercy, conciliation and a respect for the rights of property are all looked upon as signs of weakness, and are treated with contempt.

I quote an extract from a letter published in the *Observer* on the 25th February 1871 after Mr. Edgar's visit to the Western Lushais.

"Sukpial was invested with a dress of honour specially made for him,—green *pyjamas* with scarlet and gold flowers, a purple coat with green and gold embroidery, an indescribable hat of green and white silk, a necklace of glass buttons and gold beads and two glass ear-rings. One farewell tot of 'Edgars peculiar,' and the Sahib and the savage parted with mutual esteem. The policy of conciliation had reached its grand climacteric. But before the patient diplomatist had reached his bungalow in Silchar, messengers from the Lushai had proclaimed in Manipur that the Sahib had been into the hills to pay tribute to the chiefs, sure proof of their puissance and significant warning to their remaining foes. • • • What had Sukpial done to bring down on him such showers of good things? Simple question! He had raided with impunity and success. Nothing could be more congenial to their own habits and wishes. If Sukpial had slain his tens, they would slay scores. If he had butchered defenceless peasants, they would have heads of police, of sepoys, and of Sahibs."

The raids of 1871-72 on Ainerkhal, Alexandrapur, Katlichara, Maniarkhal, Nagdigram, Jhalnachara, and Kacharipara, may fairly be placed to the credit of the policy of conciliation.

To my mind there are only two possible lines of treating these and cognate tribes: one is absolute annexation, and the other total non-intervention. Half measures are futile, and those adopted must be "thorough," a conciliatory policy being useless, as it is always of a fluctuating nature, according to the special idiosyncracies of the officers deputed to enforce it. On the North-East Frontier both these systems can be used with advantage.

CHAPTER III. POPULATION.

Villages—Migration—Sex and marriage—Infirmities—Language—
Tribes—Religion—Occupations.

The statistics of population call for little comment. The Lushai Hills is a great expanse of jungle covered hills, with a sparse but homogeneous population. It is barely fifteen years since we occupied the country, and only one census has been taken of the district. The ethnographical matter, which figures so largely in census reports and gazetteers, will be found treated at length in the monograph on the Lushai tribe which is now under preparation by Major Shakespear, and need not be referred to here. The district covers an area of 7,227 square miles, the population in 1901 was 82,434, and the density was thus only 11 to the square mile. This indicates a sparseness of population which is phenomenal even in Assam, for the density of the district is only a third of that existing in the Naga, or the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

There are no towns in the district, and in 1901 the **villages.** people were living in 239 villages, the great majority of which were small hamlets with less than 500 inhabitants.

Major Shakespear gives the following description of a Lushai village :—

“Villages are generally built on the top of a ridge or spur, and not on the slope of the hill, as is the custom among the Chins.

The cause of this, I think, is that the hills are higher in the country inhabited by the Chins, and therefore they can get healthy sites without going to the top of the ridges. In former days, the choice of the village site was much influenced by its defensive capabilities, the migratory habits of the people precluding their constructing the elaborate defensive works found round the Chin villages. When we first occupied the hills, every village was strongly stockaded, two and even three rows of stockades being found in some cases. The gateways were commanded by timber block houses, and at suitable points on the roads block houses were built which were occupied whenever there was any fear of attack. The ground round the stockades and block houses was planted with sharpened bamboo spikes, which formed a very serious obstacle to a barefooted foe.

"The villages are laid out in streets all radiating from some central open spot, facing which is the chief's house and the *sawlbuk* or guest-house. The houses are built on piles on the natural slope of the hills, and thus the floor of one house is often higher than the roof of the house below it.

"The houses are all constructed in the same manner and on the same plan. At the end nearest the road is a rough platform of logs which is the place for cleaning the *dhan* in. On the front wall of the house over this platform are hung the horns of any animals the owner of the house may have killed, and among them are the baskets in which the hens hatch out their broods. The doorway has a very high sill, and the door consists of a sliding panel of bamboo work. The fireplace consists of an earthen hearth, in which three upright stones are inserted to hold the cooking pot. Above this are two bamboo shelves on which articles which require drying are kept. On each side of the fireplace are bamboo sleeping platforms, that furthest from the door being for the father and mother, the other for the daughters. Beyond the family sleeping platform is a partition, the space between which and the end wall of the house is used as a lumber-room and closet, from this a back door opens out on to a small platform. The chief's house only differs in size, generally having two rooms, the one nearest the entrance being for the use of the slaves. Windows in the sides of the house are considered unlucky, unless the right to make one has been purchased by killing two metna and feasting the village. The houses are built of timber uprights, but the walls, floor, and roof frame are made of bamboo; the thatching material used is generally cane leaves, but occasionally grass is used. Over the cane leaves broad bands

of split bamboo are tied down from eave to eave, giving the roof a rounded appearance from the outside. A long coop under the eaves is the sleeping place of the fowls, who gain access to it by a ladder made of a knotted stick.

"The *zawlbuk* is a large hall, with a huge hearth in the centre and a sleeping platform at the far end. The front wall stops about three feet short of the ground, and to enter the building you have to stoop under this, and then climb over a barrier of equal height placed a few feet further in. This building is the sleeping place of the young men of the village, and of any strangers who stop there the night. It is also a sort of general meeting house. The boys of the village have to keep up a sufficient supply of firewood for the *zawlbuk* fire.

In the centre of one of the streets will generally be found the blacksmith's forge, a small house, built on the ground level, but with a platform in front of which passers-by can sit, and lighten the labours of the smith by their conversation. The bellows consist of two hollow logs in which pistons are worked up and down, from the lower extremity of each log a tube runs to a hole in a stone placed immediately behind the stone on which the charcoal fire rests. A very moderate movement of the pistons gives an excellent draught. The blacksmith repairs all the tools of the village, but some of them are capable of a good deal more than this.

There is very little to attract immigrants to the Lushai Hills, and 93 per cent of the persons enumerated there in 1901 had been born inside the boundaries of the district. A few hundred people had moved across the frontier from Manipur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, but the bulk of the immigrants came from Nepal and were serving in or had been connected with the military police battalion. There is practically no emigration from the hills, except across the frontier of Manipur. Migration.

The proportion of women to men is very large, larger in fact than in any other district in the Province. In 1901 there were 1,113 females to every 1,000 males, the Sex and marriage.

corresponding figure for the Province as a whole being only 949. Amongst the Lushai tribes the proportion of the sexes was very nearly as 6 to 5. The cause of this surplus of women is not quite clear, but it is a phenomenon which is common to nearly all the animistic tribes, though not in quite so marked a degree. The early marriages that are so common amongst Muhammdans and Hindus tend to diminish the mean duration of female life, and from this disability the Lushais are fortunately free. In 1901 not one per cent of the married women in the district were less than 15 years of age.

The following account of the marriage customs of the Lushais is extracted from an account by Major Shakespear :—

→ “ Each clan has a regular fixed price for its girls, and any one wishing to marry a girl must pay this price sooner or later. The price varies from three metna to ten according to the clan. The price is always stated in metna, but the actual articles given or the amount paid in cash is subject to arrangement. The father or the nearest male relative on his side receives this price, but the bridegroom has also to pay many other persons. The girl's aunt will get a sum varying from Rs. 40 to Rs. 5, the elder sister gets a small sum for having carried the bride about when she was young. The bride appoints a male and female friend or protector, and each has to be paid a small amount by the bridegroom. The bride takes with her certain cloths and ornaments, but these remain the property of the girl's male relatives unless she has a child to inherit them, in which case an extra payment, varying according to the quality of the dowry, has to be paid. The nearest male relative on the bride's mother's side has also to be paid a sum varying from Rs. 40 to Rs. 4. These sums are never paid at once—in fact, many men never complete paying the price of their wives, and leave the debt to be cleared off by their children.

"A young Lushai generally chooses his own wife, and sends a Palai, or ambassador, to her parents to arrange the details of the price to be paid. These settled, the bride is escorted to her future husband's parents' house, by a party of friends, being pelted with dirt by all the children of the village. The parents of the bridegroom receive the party with brimming cups of rice-beer, and when justice has been done to this, a fowl is produced by the bridegroom and slain by the Puithiam or sorcerer, who mutters certain charms over it. Directly this is over, the bride and her girl friends retire, while the rest of the party indulge in a great feast, the bridegroom having to provide a fowl for each of those entitled to a share in the price of the bride. The following evening the bridegroom's mother goes and fetches the bride and hands her over to him at his house. The following morning the bride returns to her parents' house and spends the day there. This she continues to do for some time. The bonds of matrimony are very loose. If a couple do not get on they can separate by mutual consent, or if the husband does not like the woman he can simply send her back to her parents. In both these cases he does not recover any part of the price he may have paid, and the recipient of the price is bound to support the woman till she is married again. If the woman commits adultery, or leaves her husband without his consent, her relatives have to refund whatever they received on her account. A widow is at liberty either to return to her own people, in which case her late husband's relatives take all his property and his children, or she may continue to live in his house, in which case she retains his property in trust for his children, but should she indulge in an intrigue she is considered to be an adulteress, and her relatives have to pay back her price to her late husband's relations, who take all the property and also the children.

"Until a girl is married she may indulge in as many intrigues as she likes, but should she become pregnant her lover must pay a metna to her father; he will, however, be entitled to take the child when it is old enough to leave its mother. In case the child is a girl, the father of course gets the marriage price in due course. If a man is willing at once to marry a girl whom he has seduced he is not expected to pay more than the usual marriage price.

"All clans intermarry, the children taking the father's clan name. The marriage of first cousins is rare amongst the common people, chiefly because the parents of the girl prefer taking her price from some one outside their family circle. Among chiefs,

who are anxious to marry their children to the children of other chiefs, the marriage of first cousins is more common. Except his mother, sisters, daughters and aunts, a man may marry any woman he likes."

Infirmities. The abstract in the margin shows out of 10,000 males the number in the Lushai Hills, Assam,

	Insanc.	Deaf-mutes.	Blind.	Lepers.	
Lushai Hills ...	29	16	19	1	and the Indian Empire,
Assam ...	5	9	10	13	afflicted in 1901 with
Indian Empire,	3	6	12	5	

the four special infirmities selected for record at the census. Insanity is extraordinarily prevalent—why it is difficult to say, as the Lushais do not take intoxicating drugs and the marriage of near relations is said to be unusual. Whatever the cause may be, it is probably also responsible for the large percentage of deaf-mutes. Blindness is always common in the hills, where the smoke and dirt in the hillman's house must tend to produce ophthalmia.

Language. Lushai or Dulien, which belongs to the Kuki-Lushai group of languages, is the *lingua franca* of the district. It is described by Dr. Grierson in the Linguistic Survey of India, Vol. III, Part III, page 130. Messrs. Lorrain and Savidge have written a grammar and compiled a dictionary of the language. Other languages or dialects belonging to the Kuki-Chin group which are spoken in the hills are Zahao, Lakher, Mhar, Paite, Ralte and Ngente. Major Shakespear is, however, of opinion that these variants from the main stock will be gradually absorbed and that Dulien will become the language of the district.

The indigenous inhabitants of the district are, **Tribes.** according to Major Shakespear, all of one race. The great majority of them are Lushais or Duliens, but there are also a considerable number of Pois, or immigrants from the Chin Hills, and Hmar, a tribe which was driven out of the district into Manipur, but is now gradually returning to its former haunts. The people are divided into a number of different clans, who are differentiated from one another by distinctions in their sacrificial ritual. The Ralte, Paite, Thado, and Lakher are easily distinguishable, but many of the remaining clans can hardly be distinguished from the Lushais, and such differences as exist are disappearing every year. For information with regard to the organization, and manners and customs, of the different tribes, reference should be made to the monograph now under preparation by Major Shakespear.

Ninety-five per cent of the population of the district **Religion.** are still faithful to the religion of their forefathers, of which the following account is given by Major Shakespear.*

“The Lushais and all other tribes in the hills believe in a supreme being who made the world : he is known as Pathian, but is not thought to take much interest in the doings of people. Far more important to the average man are the numerous Ramhuai or demons who are supposed to inhabit every hill and stream, and Khuavang, a spirit sometimes spoken of as the same as Pathian, but generally considered as less powerful, but more concerned with mankind. Every illness, every failure of crops is put down either to the influence of some demon or of Khuavang, and the whole of

* Report on the Census of Assam in 1901, page 148.

a hillman's existence is spent in propitiating these spirits. The Puithiam, or sorcerer, is supposed to know what particular spirit is the cause of the trouble, and what particular sacrifice will appease him. The number of these sacrifices, and the different ways in which they have to be performed, would fill a thick book. In all of them the flesh of the animal killed is eaten by the sorcerer and his assistants, the least toothsome portions only being left for the demon. Small figures representing human beings and animals are also offered to the demons. Besides these sacrifices, there is a special sacrifice to the patron spirit of the hearth. This can only be performed by a member of the clan, and the method of performing it varies in every clan.

"The most generally accepted theory as to what happens after death is that the spirits go to 'Mit-thi-khua,' but that those men who have slain men or animals in the chase or have feasted the village are able to cross the Pail river to an abode of great comfort, where there is plenty of food and drink to be got without any work. As women cannot go to war nor kill wild animals, and are not allowed to give feasts, they can only reach this happy land if their husbands take them. Existence in "Mit-thi-khua" is full of trouble and worry.* After a certain period in one of these two abodes of departed spirits, the spirit is again born as a hornet, and after a time assumes the form of water, and if in the form of dew it falls on a man it is re-born in his child."

Details for other religions will be found in Table II. The pioneer missionaries, Messrs. Lorrain and Savidge, commenced work at Aijal in 1894, but were obliged to leave the district in 1897. Their work was carried on by the Welsh Calvinistic Mission, and as the two pioneer missionaries returned in 1903, there were altogether in 1905 four missionaries working in the district. Christianity has not, however, as yet had time to make much progress, and in 1901 there were only 26 natives who professed that faith.

* The Lushais think that Mit-thi-khua is situated in the Ri lake in the Chin Hills,

The occupations of the indigenous inhabitants of the hills begin and end with agriculture, and are of no interest from the statistical point of view. Agriculture was returned as the means of livelihood of nearly $93\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the population in 1901. The remainder were foreigners, the great bulk of whom were in Government service. Only 167 people were said to be supported by trade.

CHAPTER IV. AGRICULTURE AND CONDITION OF PEOPLE.

Agriculture—Live stock—Forests—Arts and industries—Food and dress—Condition of the people—Communications—Trade.

Agriculture. The system of agriculture is described as follows by Major Shakespear :—

In February the Lushais begin to select the sites of their cultivation. These are called *jhums*. The chief has first choice, and after him the *Ramhual*, or councillors of the chief, and then the rest of the people. Each of the *Ramhual* pays the chief from three to five baskets of rice for the land he occupies, whereas only one basket per house is demanded from the ordinary villager. Having chosen the site for his *jhum*, the Lushai has to clear it, a work of great labour, as the only tools available are his dao, a chisel-edged knife about 15 inches long, and a small axe with a head weighing about $1\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. The thicker the jungle the better the crop is a Lushai maxim. In tree jungle all the undergrowth and as many of the trees as possible are felled, those that are too big for felling are cleared of their branches. In parts where the jungle is bamboo the work is comparatively light, but the crop is not generally so good; on the other hand bamboo land can be cultivated every four or five years without the bamboos being exterminated, so that if a chief has two village sites some miles apart he can move backwards and forwards from one to the other all his life time. Tree jungle, if continually felled and burned, gives place to coarse grass, and the land, according to Lushai ideas, is then useless for cultivation, for they consider the manuring of the ground by the burning of a heavy mass of felled jungle to be absolutely necessary. By the middle or end of March the felling is over, and the hot April sun effectually dries the wood ready for the firing of the *jhums* in May. During this month the sky is hidden by dense clouds of smoke, miles of hillside often being ablaze, the fire having spread from the *jhums* to the jungle. Any charred trunks which remain are dragged to the edge of the *jhum*, and built into a close fence, for rats, jungle fowl, pheasant,

deer, &c., would leave the poor Lushai but little of his crop if he did not take this precaution. Openings are left in the fence every now and then in which snares are set to catch unwary intruders. In spite of the utmost care, however, they often lose heavily from the onslaughts of these pests.

About the end of May the whole family turns out to sow the seed, a line is formed at the lower edge of the clearing, and the party moves steadily upwards, scratching holes with their broad-bladed knives, and dropping a few seeds into each. Seeds of various sorts are occasionally sown in the same holes, and each comes up in turn. Rice is the chief crop, but melons, maize, pumpkins, millet, peas, beans, cotton and tobacco are also grown. The maize ripens first and is eagerly expected by the improvident Lushais, who are generally hard up for food, having used more rice than was wise in the manufacture of beer. If a village has had bad crops, the people at once begin moving to some village where food is more plentiful, or the adults set off in large parties to buy rice wherever it is to be had.

The live stock include tame mithun or bison (*bos* Live stock. *frontalis*), pigs, goats and dogs. The pigs are carefully tended, and treated almost as pets ; the goats are of the long-haired hill breed. Dogs are used as articles of food, and are said to be similar to those eaten by the Chinese. They are of medium size, with long yellow hair, short legs, a bushy and tightly curled tail, and a pointed nose, and are in great requisition for sacrificial purposes.

A portion of the Inner Line Reserve of the Cachar Forests. district falls within the borders of the Lushai Hills. The whole of this reserve is, however, managed from Cachar, and there are no details available with regard to the part which is actually situated in Lushai land. A considerable portion of the district is still covered with tree forest. A list of the principal trees will be found in Chapter I.

Arts and industries.

The arts and industries of the hills are naturally not of much importance. The women weave excellent cloths from their home grown cotton, and the men are clever enough at making baskets. Earthen pots and pipes are also manufactured, and the blacksmiths are more skilful than is usual in Assam. Very good moulding in brass is occasionally to be met with, and some of the smiths are able to manufacture gun locks.

Food and dress.

The staple food of the people is rice, but they will eat almost anything that they can get except rhinoceros and the hooluk monkey. They are not particular either, as to the state of putrefaction that their meat has reached. Milk, like the other hill tribes of Assam, they eschew. When a feast is given in a village the meat is boiled in huge earthen pots, and spread out on mats and plantain leaves. The guests then eat their meat without condiments, and wash it down with draughts of the water in which it was boiled. After they have finished the first course they retire to their houses and eat great quantities of rice. Beer made of fermented rice is the national drink, and is not unfrequently taken to excess. Both sexes smoke continuously. The men use pipes with bamboo bowls and a long straight stem, the women's pipes have bowls of clay and are constructed on the principle of the *huka*. The water impregnated with nicotine is carefully preserved, and each man carries a small gourd full of it. From time to time he sips a mouthful, keeps it in his mouth for a few minutes, and ejects it. It is said to act as a kind of stimulant.

Men wear a single cloth about seven feet long and five feet wide, wrapped round the body in such a way as to leave the right arm bare. Women wear a short dark blue petticoat, kept up by a brass girdle, and reaching nearly to the knee, and a short white cotton jacket. In the winter they add a cotton wrap, while the men wear cotton jackets under their shawls. Amongst the Pois and the Fanais the men wear their hair in a knot above their foreheads like the Daflas and Miris in Assam. The men of the other tribes fasten it in a knot at the nape of the neck and make all secure with ivory combs and large pins of brass or other metal. Women generally twist their hair into a knot at the back of the head. Both sexes wear amber and bead necklaces, when they can afford them, and ear-rings. The ear-rings of the women are discs of baked clay or ivory often two inches in diameter, which are fixed into the lobe of the ear and distend it in the most unsightly manner. The arms of the men are guns, spears, and daos. The guns are flint-locks, mostly old tower muskets. The stocks are carved and ornamented with patterns of red or black lacquer. Mithun horns serve as powder flasks, and are also adorned with patterns of red and black. Spears are not valued much as weapons of offence : the fighting dao is a modification of the Burmese dao and is known as *kawlnam* or Burmese dao.

Judged by their own low standards the hillmen are extremely comfortably off. The Lushais are a migratory people, and, as they have to transport all their possessions every fifth year or so to a new village, they

Condition of
the people.

have little inducement to accumulate much property. The people themselves produce all that they require, and it is said that in South Lushai the Lushais have more money than they know how to spend. The district is sparsely peopled, the *jhums* yield abundantly, and there is still plenty of jungle to give cover to the game. Porters and coolies employed on road-work receive the liberal wage of eight annas per diem. These persons have, however, to be impressed, as the Lushais are too prosperous to voluntarily undertake hard work, even for such a liberal wage as eight annas a day. Famine seldom occurs, but, in 1881, there was a scarcity in the hills due to the ravages of innumerable swarms of rats. In the previous season, the bamboos had seeded, and the supply of food thus provided caused an enormous increase in the number of these rodents, who, when they had exhausted the bamboo seed, devoured the rice crop. The Lushais descended to the Surma Valley, not to raid but in search of work and food, and Government sent about 750 tons of rice and paddy into the hills.

**Communica-
tions.**

Prior to our advent the only means of communication in the district were the Lushai paths and the rivers, and both alike were bad. At the present day there are bridle paths to most places of importance in the hills. Aijal is connected with the Cachar district by the Dhayar band path, by which it is $89\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the Cachar frontier and 120 miles to Silchar. There are rest-houses at the following places starting from Aijal: the figure in brackets represents the length of the stage:—Neiboi (11 miles), Taito (16 miles), Bolpui ($12\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Kolosib

(15 miles), Kukimara ($15\frac{3}{4}$ miles), Rengti (12 miles), Kanglai in Cachar ($9\frac{1}{2}$ miles). For travellers from Aijal to Cachar, it is, however, quicker to go to Sairang ($12\frac{1}{2}$ miles) and then boat down the Dhaleswari to Salchapra, a journey which can be performed in three or four days in the cold weather and two days in the rains. Another path runs from Aijal to Falam, the total distance to the place where it crosses the Tiao river being 106 miles. There are inspection bungalows at the following places :—Sonai (11 miles), Sakeilui ($13\frac{7}{8}$ miles), Saitual ($13\frac{3}{8}$ miles), Dulte (14 miles), Tuishen ($11\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Neidawn ($14\frac{3}{4}$ miles), Champhai ($12\frac{1}{2}$ miles). South of the Falam path there is a path to North Vanlaiphai, the total length of which is 91 miles. The following are the stages on this path :—Paikhai (11 miles), Zobawk (14 miles), Chinchip (11 miles), Chiatlang (14 miles), Keithumkawn ($13\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Checkawn ($15\frac{1}{2}$ miles), North Vanlaiphai (12 miles). From Keithumkawn a path runs to the Koladyne on the Lungleh-Haka road. West of this path runs the Aijal-Lungleh road almost due south from Aijal to Lungleh, a total distance of 107 miles. The inspection bungalows are located at the following places :—Sibutalang ($13\frac{3}{4}$ miles), Thiak (13 miles), Sialsuk ($13\frac{3}{4}$ miles), Thenzawl ($13\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Ramlai Tui (14 miles), Howlong (14 miles), Shaja ($12\frac{3}{4}$ miles), and Lungleh ($11\frac{1}{4}$ miles). From Lungleh a path runs to Demagiri (42 miles), and to the upper Koladyne river. The stages on the former are Ridge Camp ($10\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Lungsin ($13\frac{1}{2}$ miles), Tuichong (10 miles), and Demagiri (8 miles). On the latter Zobawk ($11\frac{1}{2}$ miles),

Leithe ($13\frac{1}{4}$ miles), Darjow ($11\frac{1}{4}$ miles), and South Vanlaiphai (10 miles). From Demagiri there is a path to Thega (6 miles), and a cart-road $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length to the Karnaphuli river. There are five permanent bridges in the district and three ferries. Temporary bridges of bamboo, timber, and cane have been erected in other places. The Dhaleswari and the Karnaphuli are the only rivers in the hills that are used as routes for traffic. Boats of forty maunds burthen can proceed up the former river as far as Sairang even in the cold weather. The passage upstream is, however, very slow. In the cold weather a boat with a load of forty maunds generally takes three weeks for the journey from Silchar to Sairang, and in the rains the voyage is often twice as long. At that season of the year it generally takes a boat a week to negotiate the $6\frac{3}{4}$ miles of roaring torrent that separates Changsil from Sairang. A boat carrying ten maunds or so can, however, do the voyage from Salchapra to Sairang in ten days in the cold weather and in about sixteen to twenty in the rains.

Trade.

There is no trade of any importance amongst the Lushais. A certain amount of wax is sold to the shopkeepers, and itinerant dealers from Burma, Manipur, and the Naga Hills peddle gongs and beads amongst the villages. Forest produce is exported from the district, but the business is in the hands of plainsmen who send their sawyers into the hills. The only villages in the hills in which there are shops are Aijal, Demagiri, Sairang and Lungleh. In Aijal there are seventeen

shops, at Lungleh there are two, and at Demagiri eight. Salt, cloths, brass pots, umbrellas, and ornaments are the articles which command the largest sale amongst the Lushais.

CHAPTER V.

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

Land revenue—Government—Constitution of Society—Criminal and Civil Justice—Garrison—Education—Medical aspects.

**Land
revenue.**

Land revenue is only assessed on the holdings of the missionaries at Lungleh and Aijal, and on the shopkeepers. The former pay at the rate of one rupee an acre, the latter at the rate of four annas a *katha* or one anna per running foot of frontage. The only tax paid by the Lushais is a tax of Rs. 2 per house, and even this is remitted in cases, though such cases are rare, of genuine poverty. The Lushais follow the system of *jhum* or fluctuating cultivation, but where possible, a definite tract of land, lying within clearly defined natural boundaries, has been assigned to each chief. Within these boundaries he can wander at will, without running the risk of encroaching on the land of neighbouring villages. Excise is not a question of any importance in the hills. No attempt is made to tax rice-beer, and the Lushais do not take intoxicating drugs or country spirit. Only one license is issued in the district, and that is for the sale of ganja at Aijal. Income-tax is only deducted from the salaries of Government servants. No revenue is realized in the hills either from judicial or non-judicial stamps, except in the case of civil suits instituted by foreigners.

Government.

For administrative purposes the district is divided into two subdivisions, Aijal and Lungleh. Aijal is in

the charge of the Superintendent of the district who is allowed one Assistant Superintendent of Police as his immediate assistant. Two Assistant Superintendents of Police are sanctioned for Lungleh. For the purposes of internal administration the district is divided into eighteen circles, twelve in the Aijal and six in the Lungleh subdivision. Each of these circles is placed in charge of an interpreter, who lives at some central spot. Orders issued by the Superintendent are transmitted to this man for communication to the chiefs. He is also required to submit every fortnight a report on the state of the crops, and the general condition of affairs within his circle. Society is, however, organized on the aristocratic basis, and in all minor matters the people are subject to their chiefs.

Major Shakespear gives the following account of the relations existing between a chief and his people:—

**Constitution
of society.**

The people live in villages, each of which is ruled by a chief, who is entirely independent. Even a young son will not admit his father's right to influence him, after he has once established a separate village. The chief is supreme in his own village, but the people are very democratic, and have a very easy remedy if a chief oppresses them, *viz.*, to remove to another village. The chief settles all disputes in the village, arranges where the *jhums* are to be, and when and where a village is to move. His house is the poor-house of the village, and all orphans and others who have no means of support are received there, and get food in return for their labour. Formerly, a person who had committed some serious crime could enter the chief's house and thus escape vengeance.

When a child has been brought up in the chief's house, it is in some respects a slave. Girls are released on marriage, but the chief receives the marriage price. Boys have to buy their release at the cost of a metna. A chief sometimes buys a wife for a favourite slave, and sets him up in a separate house, and three years

after the man will be considered free, but his children are sometimes considered slaves. The chief's slaves are very well off, they wear the chief's ornaments and eat the best food to be got, and do no more work than they would have to do if they were not slaves.

The chief has several advisers who are called *Upa* or *Ramhuan*¹. They have the first choice of *jhum* land, and sometimes the chief allows them to get a basket of rice from each house. The other village officials are the crier, who goes round the village after dark, shouting out the chief's orders, the blacksmith, and the *Puithian*, or sorcerer, who performs sacrifices in case of illness. These persons generally receive a donation of rice from each house in return for their services.

The chief receives from one to five baskets of rice according to the quality of the *jhum* land assigned to the cultivators; he also receives a hindquarter of every animal killed in the chase, besides some other small dues.

There is a regular code of punishments for different offences, the chief of course receiving a share of every fine levied.

**Criminal and
Civil Justice.**

The High Court has no jurisdiction in the hills, except in criminal cases in which European British subjects are concerned. The Superintendent exercises the powers of life and death, and can impose sentences of imprisonment up to the maximum amount provided for the offence. The death penalty or sentences of imprisonment for seven years and upwards require, however, the confirmation of the Local Government. Appeals lie to the Superintendent from the decisions of his assistants, who are invested with such powers, not exceeding the powers of a Magistrate of the first class, as the Lieutenant-Governor thinks fit. The rules for the administration of justice in the district will be found in the Supplement to the Manual of Local Rules and Orders, page 14. Litigation is discouraged and judicial work is light. Details will be found in Table V.

The garrison of the district is furnished by a battalion **Garrison.** of military police with headquarters at Aijal. The men are armed with Martini-Henry rifles, mark IV, bayonets and kukris. The strength both of the military and civil police with the outposts held by them will be found in Table VII. There is a small subsidiary jail at Aijal with accommodation for 13 prisoners. The average daily population in 1904 was only 4.

The Lushais seem to appreciate the advantages of edu- **Education.** cation more keenly than any of the hill tribes in Assam, except, perhaps, the Khasis. In 1901, no less than 25 per mille of the male Lushai population knew how to read and write. Some of them acquired this knowledge to enable them to assist in carrying out the census. In villages in which there was no one qualified to act as enumerator, a young man was selected and sent to Aijal, where he was taught how to read and write and instructed in the rules. Education is largely in the hands of the Welsh Calvinistic Mission at Aijal, and of the American Baptists at Lungleh. In Aijal the missionaries maintain an Upper Primary School in which Lushais are trained to act as village school masters. Instruction is given in the Lushai language, in books printed in Roman character, as Lushai has no character of its own. The village schools are situated at Aijal, Phulpui, Maite, Lungtan, Khuangleng, Mutthi, Zuktual, Hmunpui, Biate, Khandai, Maubawk, Khawlian and Rasiveng in the Aijal subdivision and at Serkawn, Khongbok (Jadala's), Khongbok (Lalluova's), Ngarchip

and Sethlun. The number of scholars will be found in Table VIII.

With the object of providing Lushais who have mastered the art of reading with something that they can read, a magazine is published once a month. Technical education also is not neglected, and Lushai boys are trained in the workshops of the Public Works Department.

Medical aspects.

Attempts have recently been made to record vital statistics in the hills, but as yet the returns cannot be said to possess very much value. Epidemics seldom occur, and fever is, doubtless, the most deadly lethal agent in the district. There are dispensaries at Aijal, Sairang, Tenzol, Kolosib, Lungleh, Balpui and Demagiri. At all of these places except Balpui there is accommodation for in-door patients. Worms, malarial fevers, ulcers, and diseases of the skin, diseases of the respiratory system, and rheumatic affections, are the ailments for which treatment is most frequently applied. Out-patients are also treated at the military police hospitals. The Lushais are said to have some faith in European medicines and they attend willingly at the hospitals, but they do not care for vaccination. They have never suffered from small-pox, and so do not appreciate the advantages of a prophylactic.

APPENDIX.

List of Tables.

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TABLE I.

Rainfall.

The number of years on which the average is calculated is shown against the name of each station.

Months.	AVERAGE RAINFALL IN INCHES.		
	Aijal (7 years).	Lungleh (11 years).	Demagiri (23 years).
January	0·31	0·17	0·41
February	1·20	0·60	1·35
March	3·84	4·00	3·09
April	4·93	4·74	4·69
May	10·68	14·17	12·75
June	15·24	24·55	19·81
July	9·96	26·70	17·02
August	13·15	23·33	19·37
September	12·65	19·63	16·79
October	6·62	10·72	7·14
November	0·67	1·94	1·53
December	0·77	0·61	0·64
Total of year ...	80·02	131·16	105·19

TABLE II.
General statistics of population.

Particulars.	Persons.	Males.	Females.
POPULATION—			
1901.	82,434	39,004	43,430
1901.			
RELIGION—			
Hindus	3,373	2,639	734
Muhammadans	202	195	7
Animistics	78,657	36,038	42,619
Total Christians	45	31	14
Anglican Communion	17	14	3
Calvinist	27	17	10
Other religions	157	101	56
CIVIL CONDITION—			
Unmarried	43,999	22,017	21,982
Married	30,468	15,754	14,714
Widowed	7,967	1,233	6,734
LITERACY—			
Literate in Bengali	248	231	17
Literate in English	182	175	7
Illiterate	80,376	36,999	43,377
LANGUAGES SPOKEN—			
Lushai	71,990	32,009	39,981
Lakher	3,216	1,548	1,668
Chin	2,149	1,588	561

TABLE III.

Birth-place, race, caste and occupation.

	Persons.	Males.	Females.
BIRTH-PLACE—			
Born in district	76,509	34,963	41,546
Do. other parts of Province ...	1,140	718	422
Do. Chittagong	924	519	405
Do. other parts of Bengal ...	508	478	30
Do. United Provinces	215	202	13
Do. Nepal	1,438	1,234	204
Do. elsewhere	1,700	890	810
RACE AND CASTE—			
Lushai	36,382	16,730	19,652
Lushai (Hmar)	10,411	4,683	5,728
Do. (Paithe)... ..	2,810	1,315	1,495
Do. (Ralte)	13,827	6,205	7,622
Poi	15,039	6,960	8,079
OCCUPATION—			
Workers	46,667	23,969	22,698
Dependents	35,767	Not available.	
TOTAL SUPPORTED—			
Jhum cultivators	76,382	34,953	41,429

TABLE IV.

Prices of food staples in seers obtainable per rupee.

			AIJAL.		
			Common rice.	Salt,	Matikalai.
1903 ...	2nd week of August	...	6½	6½	5
1904 ...	2nd week of February	...	6½	6½	5½
	2nd week of August	...	8	6½	5½
1905 ...	2nd week of February	...	8	6½	5½
	2nd week of August	...			
1906...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1907 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1908 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1909 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1910 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1911 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			
1912 ...	2nd week of February	...			
	2nd week of August	...			

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Hheads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
AIJAL SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	...	...	...	...		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	1	1	...	...		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 306.	1	1	1	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	...	...	...	...		
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	...	...	...	...		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	...	...	...	...		
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398.	...	...	...	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	1	1	...	...		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 440—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	...	...	...	...		

53

and Civil Justice.

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
AIJAL SUBDIVISION —(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	...	...	...	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against the property.	1	...	...	...		
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	10	5	6	3		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	1	...	3	3		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	...	...	1	1		
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	1	...	...	...		
Total ...	16	8	11	8		
LUNGLEH SUBDIVISION.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	...	...	...	...		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	...	...	...	...		

TABLE V.

v.

and Civil Justice—(contd.)

[illegible]

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
I. UNGLEH SUBDIVISION— <i>contd.</i>)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	1	1	...	...		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—328, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	...	...	...	...		
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	...	...	1	1		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	...	...	...	...		
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398.	...	...	...	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	...	...	...	...		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	...	...	...	...		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	...	...	...	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	...	...	...	...		

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
LUNGLKH SUBDIVISION—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	1	...	6	2		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	...	...	...	...		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	...	...	...	...		
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	...	...	4	4		
Total ...	2	1	11	7		
DISTRICT TOTAL.						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(i) Rioting or unlawful assembly, sections 143—153, 157, 158 and 159.	...	...	...	...		
(ii) Other offences against the State, public tranquillity, &c.	1	1	...	...		
(iii) Murder, attempt at murder and culpable homicide, sections 302—304, 307, 308 and 396.	2	2	1	1		
(iv) Grievous hurt and hurt by dangerous weapon, sections 324—326, 329, 331, 333 and 335.	...	...	...	...		

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(contd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(v) Serious criminal force, sections 353, 354, 356 and 357.	...	...	1	1		
(vi) Other serious offences against the person.	...	...	...	...		
(vii) Dacoity, sections 395, 397 and 398.	...	...	...	...		
(viii) Serious mischief, including mischief by killing, poisoning or maiming any animal, sections 270, 281, 282, 428, 429, 430—433 and 435—440.	1	1	...	...		
(ix) House breaking and serious house trespass, sections 449—452, 454, 455 and 457—460.	...	...	...	...		
(x) Wrongful restraint and confinement, sections 341—344.	...	...	...	...		
(xi) Other serious offences against the person and property or against property.	1	...	...	...		
(xii) Theft, sections 379—382 ...	11	5	12	5		
(xiii) Receiving stolen property, sections 411 and 414.	1	...	3	3		
(xiv) Lurking and criminal house trespass, sections 453, 456, 447 and 448.	...	...	1	1		

TABLE
Statistics of Criminal

Heads of crime.	1902.		1903.		1904.	
	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.	True.	Detected.
DISTRICT TOTAL—(concl'd.)						
<i>Criminal Justice.</i>						
Number of cases.						
(xv) Other minor offences against property.	1	...	4	4		
Total ...	18	9	22	15		
<i>Civil Justice.</i>						
Suits for money and movables ...		177		163		271
Title and other suits ...		101		46		86
Total ...		278		209		357

TABLE V.

V.

and Civil Justice—(concl'd.)

[illegible]

TABLE
Finance—

Principal heads.				1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.
				Rs.	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
Land revenue	...	...	...	...	...	...	142
House tax	...	...	...	28,139	28,193	26,188	30,064
Ganja	...	...	...	680	360	580	350
Other heads of excise revenue	...	...	...	328	...	...	...
Assessed taxes	...	...	...	2,449	2,450	2,562	2,079
No. of Assessments per ‰	...	...	...	1	1	1	...
Forests	...	...	...	...	...	68	410
Total	...	...	...	31,590	31,003	29,398	33,065

TABLE VII.

Civil and military police stations and outposts in 1904.

Names of stations and outposts.	SANCTIONED STRENGTH.			
	Sub-In-spectors.	Head Constables.	Constables.	Total.
CIVIL POLICE.				
<i>Aijal Subdivision.</i>				
Aijal P.S.	1	4	20	25
Kolosib O.P.	...	1	2	3
Sairang O.P.	...	1	5	6
<i>Lungleh Subdivision.</i>				
Demagiri P.S.	1	2	10	13
Lungleh P.S.	...	1	3	4
MILITARY POLICE.*				
	Distance from headquarters.	Officers.		Non-commissioned officers and men.
	Miles.			
Champhai	91	1		50
Lungleh	107½	2 Companies.		
North Vonlaiphai	91	1		30
South Do.	110½	1		50
Total expenditure	Rs. 3,75,313			

* The sanctioned strength of the force is 99 officers and 701 men.

TABLE VIII.

Education.

	1900-01.	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.	1905-06.	1906-07.	1907-08.	1908-09.	1909-10.	1910-11.	1911-12.
UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOLS.												
Number	...	...	...	1								
Number of boys reading in upper primary classes.	...	...	...	16								
Number of boys reading in lower primary classes.	...	...	...	...								
LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS.												
Number	3	4	5	13								
Number of boys reading in three upper classes.	...	...	225	270								
Number of boys reading in lower classes.	(a) 86	(a) 230	97	408								
FEMALE EDUCATION.												
Number of girls' schools	...	...	...	3								
" " " reading (whether in girls' or in boys' schools) in	...	...	...	...								
Upper primary schools	...	...	...	5								
Lower primary schools	...	19	13	56								

(a) Separate figures not available.

TABLE IX.

Medical.

Particulars.	Aijal.	Lungleh.	Total District.
	1901.	1901.	1901.
Number of dispensaries ...	4	2	6
Daily average number of in-door patients	23.50	6.00	29.50
" " " out-door "	50.75	34.86	85.61
Cases treated ...	12,428	7,679	20,107
Operations performed ...	214	66	280
Total income ... Rs.	8,021	2,996	11,017
Income from Government ... Rs.	8,021	2,996	11,017
Total expenditure ... Rs.	8,021	2,996	11,017
Expenditure on establishment Rs.	4,621	2,047	6,668
Ratio per mille of persons vaccinated ...	Not available		17.38
Cost per case ... Rs.	Do.		0.5-1

TABLE
Dispen-

Name of dispen- sary.	1900.		1901.		1902.		1903.		1904.		1905.	
	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.	Total cost.	Cases treated.
	Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.	
Aijal ...	4,981	6,331	4,828	6,650	5,869	9,364	3,577	9,692	5,894	10,076		
Sairang...	1,117	2,805	1,151	2,452	1,464	2,564	1,237	2,568	1,322	1,492		
Tenzol ...	711	1,825	1,096	2,644	1,212	3,213	1,163	3,898	1,203	3,987		
Kolosib ...	715	580	946	682	893	690	842	941	1,029	870		
Balpui ...	904	2,324	1,045	6,145	1,207	5,613	884	5,270	767	4,912		
Demagiri	1,899	1,382	1,951	1,534	2,245	1,636	1,658	1,792	1,711	1,800		
Lungleh	...	...	...	...	2,791	5,250	3,193	6,266	2,494	7,311		

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